

COVENANTED PEOPLES:

The Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist Coalitions in
Growth, Maturity and Decay

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DECLARATION

I declare that except where acknowledged by appropriate forms of scholarly reference, the research and writing of this thesis have been entirely my own original work.

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a.m. 

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PART ONE

THE GROWTH OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST AND AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Comparing Societies in Conflict

The comparison of societies is one of the staples of social science, yet it is one of the most problematic practices in the profession. The attractions of comparative studies are not hard to find. The most basic is probably no more than this; to compare is an inescapably human preoccupation - an intellectual reflex. Added to this, the morphology of societies in the last hundred years or so has displayed an exciting and intriguing dissonance between integration and the reassertion of diversity. Shaped by imperialism and the various transformations for which 'modernisation' is a convenient shorthand term, the world has shown signs of developing into a single political system, a global society and a world economy. At the same time, and often in deliberate reaction to these developments, the consciousness of national, ethnic, racial, religious and other forms of diversity has mocked too hasty presumptions of confidence in their ineluctable progress. This dissonance between the development of uniformity and the re-statement of singularity helps to fuel several of the most durable conflicts of our time, which appear to share pathological symptoms visible with depressing regularity to the most casual television viewer. These conflicts co-exist clumsily

with a common global discourse of democracy, self-determination and human rights, a common political structure in the territorial (nominally 'nation') state, and an increasingly common experience of global patterns of production and consumption. The competitive juxtaposition of shared and singular elements in conflict situations is a powerful stimulus to comparative studies

It is against such a background that opportunities for comparative study of Northern Ireland and South Africa present themselves. Both these societies are marked by their histories as colonies of settlement. The consequences of conquest and dispossession have made themselves felt in discrimination and exclusion, material and status inequalities and subjective identities of settler and native. These in turn are codified in rival claims to self-determination which are pursued through similar discourses of partition, accommodation and assimilation. Endemic political violence in both societies has displayed dimensions of armed struggle, counter-insurgency and communal hostility.

Not surprisingly, each similarity is diluted by differences of nuance or degree. Among these are the respective distances from and nature of the relationship to the metropole and metropolitan influence. The demographic make-up and nature of economic resources available for exploitation are quite different in each case. There is sharp divergence in the degree to which each has been an 'international issue'. Forms of identity and claims to self-determination contradict as well as complement each other. Such differences prompt understandable fears that in comparative studies each national component may receive less than its due. Naturally enough, those who have established a degree of mastery over single cases (and perhaps who have

considerable intellectual and even emotional capital tied up in them) are sceptical of what they see as glib and self-interested comparisons by those who probably know less at primary level and first hand.¹

Similarity and singularity co-exist confusingly, emphasising seductive comparative possibilities at one moment and sizable obstructions at the next. The issue is clouded further by the fact that comparison is not always a disinterested activity. A useful strategy for an isolated and unpopular regime is to put itself 'in perspective' by comparison with other conflicts involving similar (or allegedly similar) elements like ethnicity and rival nationalisms. South Africa is a case in point. Something of this sort was certainly going on in the rash of comparative concern about 'plural societies', in conferences, projects and publications funded by Department of Information front organisations in the mid-1970s, before such practices were revealed in the 'Muldergate' scandal. In direct lineage from these dubious enterprises, the South African government's attempts to market consociationalism in the 1980s as a panacea for the ills of 'divided societies' are worthy of mention. As a result, South African opposition movements have tended to be suspicious of any comparative dimension to the study of South African conflicts, no matter how disinterested or potentially fruitful. Anything which undermined the view of apartheid as sui generis and uniquely evil put at risk the gains of hard-fought political struggle.

This has not prevented others claiming honorific affinity with South African liberation movements themselves. Identifying Northern Ireland Protestants as a 'labour aristocracy';

.. allowed the Adams axis to provide an internationally appealing version of their struggle. Just as the IRA and Sinn Fein were presented as the equivalents of the ANC and the PLO, the very substantial obstacle to a United Ireland represented by the Protestant community was identified with 'privileged colon' reaction from Algeria to Israel and South Africa.²

Indeed the South African comparison is one that Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams is fond of deploying,³ although such unfavourable juxtapositions of Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners have also come from other, less predictable sources. For instance, a first secretary at the British embassy in Washington caused a furore by comparing Ulster Protestants to Afrikaners at a meeting of representatives of investment organisations in Boston:

He said of the Ulster Protestants: "They have a lot in common with the - it sounds unfair to say this but it's true - with the Afrikaners in South Africa or the Zionists in the kibbutzes in Israel .. and they have embarrassed successive British governments by proclaiming their loyalty to the Crown and to the Union."⁴

In fact, such argument by analogy is a staple in the discourse of conflict in and around societies like Northern Ireland and South Africa. Participants in such conflicts habitually try to gain moral purchase by investing their own cause with reflected legitimacy, or an opponent's with second-hand opprobrium.⁵ In a sense, this phenomenon is one of the best arguments for comparative studies of societies in conflict, and one of the best counter-arguments to the custodians of singularity. Comparison is a fact of life in societies like Northern Ireland and South Africa; politicians do it,⁶ journalists do it, the person in the street does it.⁷ As a result, there is all the more reason

for academic social scientists to do it systematically and well.

Perspectives in the Literature

Despite the intellectual challenges which are clearly signalled in surface similarities between the two societies and the imperative of evaluating widely held popular assumptions about parallels between them, "...with notable exceptions, scholars have been curiously reluctant to embark on systematic comparisons which aim at drawing conclusions by viewing South Africa, Northern Ireland and Israel together".⁸ The literature is indeed quite sparse. Self-consciously comparative writing on South Africa and Northern Ireland embraces journalistic accounts⁹ and articles by academic writers in journalistic format¹⁰ as well as longer more systematic treatments. The latter include overviews¹¹ and those with more specific focus.¹² Even without explicit comparison, the juxtaposition of case studies from Northern Ireland and South Africa in thematically-organised collections suggests affinity and comparison.¹³

The collection edited by Giliomee and Gagiano includes some directly comparative chapters and others which focus individually on Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel. The comparative dimension has two principal thrusts. The first is the conceptual framework of 'divided societies' which permeates many of the chapters. Indeed its influence extends to those contributions which express scepticism about its applicability across the board, giving the collection a useful dimension of internal debate. The second is provided by the notion of 'settler societies' which strongly influences several of the chapters.¹⁴

The two most systematically developed works which deal with both Northern Ireland and South Africa are Donald Akenson's God's Peoples¹⁵ and Stanley Greenberg's Race and State in Capitalist Development.¹⁶ These studies have three common characteristics which are worth noting at the outset of this one. The first is that both deal with the two societies as part of wider comparative frameworks. Akenson brackets Ulster Presbyterians¹⁷ and Afrikaners along with Zionists as creators and holders of 'covenantal cultures'. In Greenberg's work, Northern Ireland and Israel play minor supporting roles as 'related settings' in a much more fully worked-out thesis involving economic growth and racial domination in South Africa and Alabama.

Secondly, in terms of an influential classification of comparative studies, both works lean towards the 'parallel demonstration of theory' in which;

.. the reason for juxtaposing case histories is to persuade the reader that a given, explicitly delineated hypothesis or theory can repeatedly demonstrate its fruitfulness - its ability convincingly to order the evidence - when applied to a series of relevant historical trajectories.¹⁸

Thirdly, neither study focuses directly on political systems or political movements. Akenson at times sounds like a particularly zealous cultural determinist for whom systems of belief very largely shape social patterns and political structures. In Israel, Northern Ireland and South Africa, "...mind literally overcomes matter".¹⁹ His principal interest is in the 'covenantal grid' he claims to discern in the three societies, the 'cultural wiring' derived from the Old Testament which underpins and animates the political behaviour of Ulster Protestants, Afrikaners and Israelis. On the whole, the political movements which articulated and

mobilised the interests and energies of these groups are accorded the attention due to second-order phenomena.

Greenberg is not as concerned to assert the claims of one explanatory dimension in the way Akenson is. But he too is not principally concerned with governments, parties and political movements. His focus is on farmers, workers and businessmen, and the dynamics of economic growth. While the fact that these 'class actors' were participants in popular political movements is obviously not unknown to him, he certainly does not emphasise it, and indeed acknowledges it only rarely.

As the rest of this chapter should make clear, this study will differ from Akenson's and Greenberg's on all three of these counts. Its focus will be directly on Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism in their various institutional forms and components, to the exclusion of third or further contexts and examples. It will, moreover, be concerned as much to discuss and explain contrasting elements of their life cycles, as well as to bring forward and account for essential similarities.

Although Greenberg's and Akenson's work will be cited and discussed in the text that follows, some preliminary discussion is necessary.

In God's Peoples, Donald Akenson has fashioned a powerfully argued thesis, according to which a belief system derived from the Old Testament has become embodied in states created respectively by Afrikaners, Israelis and Ulster Protestants. The dominant motif in this 'cultural grid' is the Covenant between God and a chosen people, while others include particular historical and legalistic modes of thought, attachment to a promised land, a disposition to make sharp

distinctions between the sacred and the profane, and a prominent place for blood sacrifice in group mythology. An essential feature of this grid is how the motifs dovetail into a self-reinforcing cultural structure. According to Akenson, the parts of the belief system support each other, bestowing great durability on this structure, but when some cultural point of no return is reached and one component is irrevocably discredited, all are compromised and the whole structure comes apart.

The predominant share of the book's energies is taken up in establishing the hegemony of the covenantal grid in shaping the Afrikaner, Ulster Protestant and Zionist cultures up to the point where they are embodied in their own states. The further development of these state systems is examined in rather less detail, and even less attention is paid to the subsequently declining influence of the Ulster Protestant and Afrikaner covenantal cultures. It is hard to recognise the confident cultures whose ascendancy Akenson traces and plots over three centuries in his portraits of chosen people overcome with doubt and confusion. The reader who has accepted Akenson's single-minded assertion of the virility and durability of covenanting cultures over the millennia since the Hebrew scriptures were written, and in the centuries of their development in Northern Ireland and South Africa may find this recessional postscript something of an anti-climax or even an enigma.

Part of the problem lies in Akenson's assumption that 'cultures' create states. In a broad sense this is probably true, but more specifically it is political movements which capture and exercise power, fashion and develop state forms. The holy myths and theologised patterns of thought which dominate Akenson's analysis have had to co-exist in these movements with a conglomeration of secular political ideas

and interests. This co-existence can be competitive as well as harmonious and it is one of the functions of political movements to integrate the various elements as best they can. In Akenson's account, such considerations are quite overshadowed by the hegemony of the cultural grid, which may amount to mistaking the part for the whole. If this were the case, the breakup of what were two quite diverse coalitions -- Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism -- could be made to appear more puzzling than necessary.

The purpose of Greenberg's "parallel demonstration of theory" is to establish theoretical propositions about the relationship between capitalism and state-sanctioned systems of ethnic and racial discrimination. This orientation and the relative weight assigned to Northern Ireland among the four societies discussed, rule out a full-scale comparison of Northern Ireland and South Africa in Greenberg's work. As a result, it would be unfair to complain that Race and State in Capitalist Development does not provide this.

Nevertheless, it is legitimate to point to shortcomings within the book's own terms of reference. For instance, a substantial portion of Greenberg's thesis²⁰ deals with the development of 'bounded' working classes,²¹ in which white workers in South Africa and Alabama, and Jewish workers in Israel, played their parts as 'dominant class actors' in racially divided societies. In an extraordinary and inexplicable omission, Protestant workers in Northern Ireland are not discussed, despite the fact that, arguably, the Protestant working class has been (in Greenberg's terms) the most important 'class actor'²² in the Northern Ireland situation.²³ Certainly, to discuss the phenomenon of 'bounded' working classes without considering divisions in Northern Ireland's working class and the relationship between the Protestant working class and the Unionist bourgeoisie detracts greatly from the concept's authority.²⁴

A related problem is that although Greenberg invokes "'moments,' the events, facts and 'living men' without which 'there is no history'",²⁵ the dominant tenor of his thesis is of the unfolding logic of economic systems, rather than the conflicts of competing political movements.

Specifically, his readers could be forgiven for failing to grasp that Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism were vigorous popular political movements which articulated and integrated a rich variety of what were sometimes contradictory popular political positions. Moreover, while his designation of 'dominant classes' in each of his research settings is correct, his treatments of Northern Ireland and South Africa underestimate the extent to which Afrikaners and Protestants felt themselves to be threatened by the competing popular forces of Irish and African nationalisms, and in general how insecure their dominance could appear in their own eyes and understandings.²⁶

The Subject of this Study

These 'dominant classes' have begun to attract an increasing share of comparative attention in both popular²⁷ and scholarly²⁸ works. Indeed although revolutionary nationalist movements probably still hold superior attractions for most scholars, at least some people have come to share Patrick Buckland's concern that:

..it may be that far too much attention has been paid to the rise of nationalist movements in various parts of the world and insufficient acknowledgement given to their opponents, for the pace and nature of historical change is determined as much by the upholders of the status quo as by advocates of change.²⁹

Buckland's own summary of the Unionists' predicament (which has remained valid not only for the period of Home Rule agitation about which he was writing, but ever since) helpfully points up parallels with the Afrikaners:

Like their colonial counterparts elsewhere, they were faced with three broad options as they saw power and privilege about to be ripped from their grasp. They could simply succumb. They could try to come to terms with the nationalists and carve out for themselves a position of influence in the new order. Or they could resist and try to maintain the status quo.³⁰

The similarity of Ulster Protestants' and Afrikaners' predicaments is attributable to characteristics which the two groups have in common and to parallels in the historical forces which have shaped them. Both display a high degree of self-conscious identity and a propensity to define political association and conflict in 'group' terms. These characteristics are expressed in each case in a vigorously expressed aspiration to self-determination. It is true that the Ulster Protestants' determination to control their own political destiny has been more ambiguous than the Afrikaners' full-blown nationalism and claim to statehood. These ambiguities are best caught in the nature of 'loyalism' and its place in the larger phenomenon of Ulster Unionism.³¹ But whether or not loyalist versions of Ulster Unionism qualify as 'quasi-nationalism', 'proto-nationalism', or 'unsatisfied nationalism',³² Ulster Protestants have made it clear at least since the introduction of the First Home Rule Bill that they reserve the right to determine their own political status independently of any understanding between British authority and the forces of Irish nationalism. This claim to self-determination is the distinguishing mark of loyalism.

Both Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners inhabit industrial societies, (although rural interests are important in each), yet both draw on settler origins for this sense of identity and aspiration to self-determination. Both are physically situated among larger 'native' populations, which are regarded as at best culturally alien, and at worst, primordial enemies. Neither has unambiguous title to a well defined territory and both are economically integrated with those whom they reject politically. Each has attempted to concoct and control a political system in which it could claim to be a majority.³³ Each has proceeded from the assumption that political absorption into the 'alien' majority is unacceptable, in the forms respectively of a united Ireland, and a unitary South Africa in which all would enjoy equal rights. As a result, both have faced endemic legitimacy crises associated with ethnic domination, discriminatory practices, repressive, de facto, one-party rule. Each has faced (especially in recent years) the dilemma of choice between accommodation and repression.

An important feature of all this has been the effective political mobilisation of both groups or communities along ethnic lines. Both organised in response to crises; in the case of Afrikaners, impoverishment, urbanisation, resistance to British imperialism, and the dangers of economic and political competition from the black majority constituted the elements of the crisis. For Ulster Protestants, they were provided by the long-drawn-out confrontation between Irish nationalism and British imperialism which culminated in partition and the creation of Northern Ireland.

After this period of growth, both matured in the capture and exercise of state power. In each case, the movement has partly decayed in the context of a sharply renewed and

heightened legitimacy crisis. This in turn has been composed of resistance from those excluded from political power (respectively, blacks and Catholics), external pressures (respectively, from a broadly based movement in the international community, and from the British government) and social and economic changes internal to their own constituents. The fault line in each case has been between those who have tried to carry out reform from above (violating some of the populist and 'democratic' premises on which both movements were based), emphasising power-sharing to broaden the basis of government and those who have resisted such accommodating moves on the grounds that they presage surrender and assimilation.

Considerations of Methodology

On the face of it then, Ulster Unionism, and Afrikaner Nationalism (the movements which are the products of this mobilisation) have similar life-cycles, and the communities which produced them seem to share numerous structural similarities, to the extent that comparative study should be a worthwhile intellectual task. If this is the case, two preliminary questions present themselves; what should the study's methodological orientation be? And given that the main subject of the study is the life cycles of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, what should be its principal focus?

Skocpol and Somers' threefold classification of the 'logics' of comparative studies is very helpful on the methodological issue. A two-case comparison is probably too narrow for the "parallel demonstration of theory" or "macro-causal analysis"³⁴ procedures and given the peculiarities of historical experience exemplified by Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners, it would be difficult to assemble a broad range

of comparable societies.³⁵ In any case, the number and strength of singularities displayed by the two cases suggest that the highlighting of contrast should be an important element of a comparative study. Under these circumstances, 'the contrast of contexts' logic seems appropriate. Skocpol and Somers describe the aim of this approach as :

...to bring out the unique features of each particular case ..and to show how these unique features affect the working out of putatively general social processes... Whereas explicit theorising is characteristic of the Parallel type of comparative history, what matters more in the Contrast-oriented type is that the historical integrity of each case as a whole is carefully respected.³⁶

Such an approach seems fitting to groups (or 'peoples' or 'nations') which constitute in Skocpol and Somers' terms "relatively irreducible wholes, each a complex and unique sociohistorical configuration in its own right". Given the considerable volume of the literatures on each of the cases, it is possible to carry out such a study largely (though not exclusively) through a synthesis and interpretation of secondary sources.

Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism as Coalitions

The principal focus is provided by what is now the widely-accepted verdict that Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners were organised into coalitions of identity and interest, rather than the monoliths of self-serving imagination and popular misconception. Apart from offering more convincing interpretations of the two individual cases, the coalition idea bestows a further dimension of similarity and incentive for comparison. As a result, this study looks at the political and wider social movements which characterised the

internal organisation of Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners in terms of the fostering of unity and the integration of diversity. Among the themes to emerge, is the question of the coalitions' internal balances of power and the tension between the demands of leadership and control from above by dominant social and political actors, and the freedom of action from below to define the limits of legitimate leadership.

The framework of comparison is provided by parallel cycles of growth, maturity and decay in the organisation and dissolution of the coalitions. In the growth phase (Chapters 2 and 3) two main themes are explored. Firstly, questions of the social composition and degree of integration of the coalitions are discussed. Secondly, comparative perspectives on the mythology and ideology of the movements are used to contrast their respective purposes and trajectories, and to throw further light on how they were internally organised. Issues of state-building (Chapter 4) dominate the maturity of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism and further reflect on questions of purpose and direction. All phases are important in these comparable cycles, but arguably that of decay and dissolution is most important. The spectacle of groups organising on ethnic or other bases to achieve and wield state power is not unfamiliar. The spectacle of them fragmenting and relinquishing power is less well-studied and as a result receives particular attention here. In this way, Chapter 5 dwells on the crises which illegitimacy and their own internal strains brought to Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, while Chapter 6 discusses the dilemmas of reform, reaction and repression which resulted from these crises. As Chapters 7-9 relate, these dilemmas demonstrated in both cases the limits of cohesion under stress and brought about the fragmentation of the coalitions.

If successfully carried out, such a comparative exercise can serve useful purposes in clarifying and refining (or discrediting) popular conceptions or misconceptions of parallels between cases. In addition, the 'visibility' of one case can be increased by contrast with another, and sharper definition achieved.³⁷ There are other possibilities beyond these limited objectives however. Comparative discussion of the cyclical transformations of these movements can contribute to debate about such issues as the nature of ethnicity and class, and the relationship between them. Some of these issues are briefly addressed in Chapter 10, the concluding chapter of this study.

1. See for instance the correspondence between Henry Patterson and Brendan O'Leary in the pages of Fortnight (June and July 1990), resulting from the latter's review (May 1990) of the former's The Politics of Illusion: Republicanism and Socialism in Modern Ireland London, Hutchinson Radius (1989). In another context, Roy Foster uses an emphatic assertion of Northern Ireland's singularity to point up the difficulties of British policy-making after 1972 and the 'bewilderment' of Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland: "The special nature of Ulster society, and the imprint of Ulster's peculiar history of partial settlement, evangelical commitment and uneven industrialization, had created a situation for which no glib historical 'precedent' nor any irrelevant colonial 'parallel' could act as a guide. Foster, R.F. Modern Ireland: 1600-1972 London, Allen Lane (1988) p.592. Emphasis added.

2. Patterson, The Politics of Illusion p.200.

3. See for instance "Participation or boycott: The view from Belfast" Weekly Mail 24-30 July 1987. For a critical comparison, see Johnston, A.M. "Participation and Paramilitary Options" Indicator SA Vol. 7 (1) Summer 1989, pp.15-18.

4. "Fury at envoy's 'Ulster shame speech'" The Independent on Sunday 2.12.90

5. This writer recalls the frequency with which civil rights activists in Northern Ireland during the late 1960s quoted an alleged statement of South African prime minister John Vorster to the effect that "he would give his right arm for one clause of the Special Powers Act". This vignette is cited in Kelley, K. The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA Dingle, Brandon (1982) p.100 and discussed in Guelke, A. "The Political Impasse in South Africa and Northern Ireland: A Comparative Perspective" Comparative Politics January 1991, pp.143-162, at p.143.

6. The grim example of Yugoslavia is increasingly invoked in both Northern Ireland and South Africa by Protestants and Afrikaners to warn of the dangers of ignoring minority ethnic claims to self-determination.

7. "In the public perception there is a vague but nevertheless unshaken belief that a common thread runs through the 'troubles' in Ulster, the 'unrest' in South Africa and the 'intifada' in the territories occupied by Israel". Giliomee, H. and Gagliano, J. The Elusive Search for Peace: South Africa, Israel, Northern Ireland Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1990) pp.1-2.

8. Giliomee and Gagliano, The Elusive Search for Peace p.2.

9. See for instance Beresford, D. "The dragon's breath is scorching South Africa as it's done in Northern Ireland" Sunday Tribune 5.8.83. David Beresford is a South African journalist who has covered both Northern Ireland and South Africa for the Guardian. See also Malan, R. "The White

Tribes of Ulster" Cosmopolitan August 1993.

10. See Johnston, A.M. "Belfast was a Peaceful Place" Frontline July 1984 pp.20-21.

11. See Guelke, A. "The Political Impasse in South Africa and Northern Ireland"; Dickie-Clark, H. "The Study of Conflict in South Africa and Northern Ireland" Social Dynamics Vol. 2 (1) 1976, pp.53-59; Giliomee, H. "South Africa, Ulster, Israel: The Elusive Search For Peace" South Africa International Vol. 19 (3) Jan. 1989, pp.140-151.

12. See Johnston, A.M. "Self-determination in Comparative Perspective: Northern Ireland and South Africa" Politikon Vol. 17 (2) December 1990 pp.5-22; Johnston, A.M. "Partition, Accommodation and Assimilation: Minorities and National Constitutions" in Johnston, A.M. and others (eds.) Constitution-Making in the New South Africa London, Leicester University Press (1993) pp.201-233.

13. See for example, Dreijmanis, J. "The Afrikaners" and Murphy, S. "The Unionists" in Watson, M. (ed.) Contemporary Minority Nationalisms London, Routledge (1990). In fact comparative allusions are briefly made on pp.202-3 and p.218.

14. For a discussion see Johnston, A.M. "South Africa in Comparative Context: The Awkward Squad on Parade" South African Historical Journal 25 (1991) pp.218-226.

15. Akenson, D.H. God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster Ithaca, Cornell University Press (1992).

16. Greenberg, S. Race and State in Capitalist Development New Haven, Yale University Press (1980).

17. The cultural traits which are of most interest to Akenson are most truly characteristic of Presbyterians, but he claims they came to dominate the political world view of all Ulster Protestants. See p.148 on their diffusion "...throughout the larger Protestant community". In further discussions of Akenson's work, unless Presbyterians are specifically meant, reference will be made to 'Ulster Protestants'.

18. Skocpol, T. and Somers, M. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry" Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 22 (1) 1980, pp.174-197, at p.176. For discussion see Giliomee and Gagliano, The Elusive Search for Peace pp.2-3

19. Akenson, God's Peoples p.146.

20. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development pp.273-380.

21. In Greenberg's terms, 'bounded' working classes are made up of working-class members of dominant groups in ethnically or racially divided societies. They conceive of themselves as having class interests and form organisations, particularly trade unions, to protect and advance them. But they are 'bounded' in the sense that they do not see

themselves as part of a wider working class which includes workers from the subordinate group. Indeed, their class interests are usually defined in opposition to these subordinate workers.

22. For Greenberg's methodological discussion of this phenomenon see Race and State in Capitalist Development pp.23-24.

23. For an analysis in which the Protestant working class is central, see Bew, P. and others, The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72 Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979), especially p.221.

24. This is especially so because the Protestant working class displays such a mixed profile. Its members have practised and demanded (of employers and the state) discriminatory protection against competition from Catholic workers, yet there is a trade union and labour movement which embraces both Protestants and Catholics.

25. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development p.24.

26. In fairness, Greenberg himself notes and regrets the skewed emphasis on the 'dominant racial groups' in the preface (page x) to Race and State... But while he acknowledges the economic imperatives perceived by these groups (growth for businessmen, fear of competition for workers) he insufficiently acknowledges the fear of political oblivion or even extinction which drove their organised political movements, Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism.

27. See for instance Crawford, R.G. Loyal To King Billy: A Portrait of the Ulster Protestants Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1987). Chapter six of this work is devoted to, "A Comparison: The Afrikaner".

28. See MacDonald, M. Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland Cambridge, Polity Press (1986), of which one chapter is devoted to comparing Protestants and Afrikaners, and the same author's "The Dominant Communities and the Costs of Legitimacy" in Giliomee and Gagliano, The Elusive Search for Peace. See also Wallis, R. and Bruce, S. "The Threatened Elect: Presbyterians in Ulster and South Africa" in their, Sociological Theory and Collective Action Belfast, Queen's University (1986) and Johnston, A.M. "Partition, Accommodation and Assimilation" and "Self-determination in Comparative Context".

29. Buckland, P. "Irish Unionism and the New Ireland" in Boyce, D.G. (ed.) The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923 London, Macmillan (1988) pp.74-5.

30. Buckland, "Irish Unionism and the New Ireland" p.74.

31. Ulster Protestants' political identity has three overlapping elements. One is Protestantism, a second is Unionism, which stresses the importance of the British link, and emphasises identification and cooperation with British institutions and conventions of political life, thirdly,

'loyalism' identifies more with the monarchy and the Protestant Succession than with British institutions, and espouses the contradictory position so confusing and infuriating to British commentators, that 'loyalists' must be prepared to disobey British authority in order to remain 'British'. These elements exist in uneasy harmony and sometimes overt tension in the Protestant political camp. The degree of tension varies between classes and religious denominations, even sometimes within the same individuals, and always in accordance with the larger political tensions of the day.

32. An idea of the range of positions on the status of Protestant Ulster in terms of nationalism can be gained from the following references; Nairn, T. The Break-Up of Britain London, New Left Books 2e (1981) pp.230-237; Miller, D.W. Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1978) pp.150-166; Beckett, J.C. "Northern Ireland" Journal of Contemporary History Vol. 6 (1) 1971, pp.130-138 (this is a special edition devoted to 'unsatisfied nationalisms'); Mason, D.W. "Nationalism and the Process of Group Mobilisation: The Case of 'Loyalism' in Northern Ireland Reconsidered" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 8 (3) July 1985 pp.408-425.

33. The strenuous social engineering of apartheid stands in contrast to Ulster Unionists' acceptance of partition as second best to saving Ireland intact for the Empire. But once it was clear this could not be achieved, the Northern Ireland state with its devolved institutions became the focus of Unionist claims to legitimate self-determination.

34. Skocpol and Somers, "Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry" pp.176-178 and pp.181-187.

35. As Greenberg's, Akenson's and Giliomee and Gagliano's works make clear, Israel can provide fruitful additional comparative material, but it would be hard to extend the range beyond this.

36. Skocpol and Somers, "Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry" p.178.

37. On these points see Reinhard Bendix, quoted in Skocpol and Somers, "Uses of Comparative History" p.180.

CHAPTER TWO

CLASS AND THE FORMATION OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST AND AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITIONS¹

PERSPECTIVES ON CLASS COALITIONS

One of the most striking features of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism has been the ability of these movements to attract and hold support from all social classes. In each case, solidarity and the imperative of undivided political leadership in a single political party have been essential to the movement's success. In both, warnings and injunctions against the dangers of disunity have been important elements of ideology. Above all, leaders have stressed the perils of class division. Many movements in different contexts have aspired to such an all-class composition, but the situations of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism are similar in that they were shaped by colonial settlement, industrialisation and imperial power. These forces created societies which in each case were differentiated along lines of race, religion, ethnicity and class.

There are several ways to understand the phenomenon of solidarity across class lines in societies such as these. It can be understood in its own terms as the natural, organic self-expression of self-determining communities and be made to illustrate the comparatively greater strength and durability of ethnic over other axes of division. On the

other hand, it can be viewed as aberrant, a form of 'false consciousness' attributable to the trading of privilege for allegiance and the manipulation of insecurities and fears. Lastly, the reality of ethnic, racial and religious identities can be recognised, but in a way which allows them to be 'decomposed' and their temporal and circumstantial nature revealed. From this perspective there is nothing false about an attachment to such an identity, but the combinations of material interests and social forces which give them purchase are subject to change, and the validity of the identities may change with them.

The principal antagonism raised by these competing frameworks lies in the claim that such all-class movements contradict or even refute class-based theories of political conflict. One authority explicitly links Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners in a work critical of Marxist class theory:

White South African workers and Ulster Protestant workers are organized in social and political formations that differ profoundly from those of their counterparts in England or Scandinavia. The fact that each of the former two sets of workers is identified politically and morally far more closely with its own bourgeoisie than with its co-workers in the subordinate group suggests that the collective social attributes of those who embody labour are of decisive importance in analysing class formation.¹

Other writers have discussed the individual cases in similar terms² and it is probably true to say that the successful integration of Protestant and Afrikaner wage earners in Northern Ireland and South Africa, into all-class political movements based on collective identities, constitutes a particularly serious challenge to the validity of class-

based theories of politics. As the chief custodians and exponents of such theories, Marxist writers have responded to this challenge by producing substantial bodies of work on Northern Ireland and South Africa in the last twenty years.³

These works are critical of both non-Marxist interpretations and earlier Marxist ones. They have set out to rework explanations of white and Protestant working class allegiances in more strictly materialistic terms, avoiding the implausibilities of earlier Marxist accounts based on the conception of false consciousness. At the same time they have taken issue with non-Marxist versions based on concepts like ethnic mobilisation.⁴ Among the theoretical issues involved in these revisionist projects have been (in the case of South Africa) drawing and redrawing the lines dividing classes and re-assessing the grounds on which groups of people are assigned to one class or another.⁵ In the case of Northern Ireland, re-evaluating the phenomenon of Unionism in the light of the uneven development of Irish capitalism⁶ and claiming an independence of identity and action for working class Protestants within Unionism,⁷ have been central to revisionist accounts.

Although the overall intention is to offer more solidly-grounded materialist explanations for Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, these works usually allow some causal weight to national, ethnic, religious and racial factors. On the other hand, the admission tends to be perfunctory and reluctant, while the exact relationships between material and non-material factors are never discussed at length.

Related issues centre on how to explain the persistence of racial and religious antagonisms and identities into urban and industrialised environments, which are usually thought to be hostile to them,⁸ and whether discriminatory practices

and systems of privilege are functional or dysfunctional to capitalism.

These problems are shadowed by political questions which underlie the intellectual debates, and sometimes break surface. In general terms, these concern the priorities of class and nation in revolutionary struggle. The issues however are configured rather differently in the two cases. In Northern Ireland, it is the status of the Protestant working class which is emphasised and the question whether alliances between it and revolutionary groups can be contrived. In the case of South Africa, the emphasis is on the possibility of splits in the ruling coalition along class lines and the opportunities such divisions might present to opposition forces. Underlying all of this, is the question of the composition of the nation, and the place of settler working classes within it. The stubborn myth that working-class Protestants could be won for nationalism or socialism (a belief now much attenuated) has been a durable element in Northern Ireland's struggles. That such possibilities have been so much more weakly expressed in the theory and practice of South African opposition provides an eloquent contrast between the two situations.

In pursuing these various controversies, Marxist and non-Marxist writers alike, often refer to Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism as 'class coalitions' or 'class alliances'. The idea of a class coalition is a useful one, but as with all concepts, the more precision which attends its use, the better. As a first stage of refinement, it is worth pointing out that class coalition as a descriptive term can have both a weak and a strong meaning. Many political parties in advanced industrial societies are class coalitions in the sense that they draw support from more than one class, and claim to represent or even embody the

national interest in an undivided society. In a strong sense however, a class coalition draws the support of all or nearly all members of a group in a divided society. It does this in explicit opposition to class politics, substituting some other ideal-type relationship -- national, religious, racial, ethnic -- or some combination of these to define the group in terms of what are claimed to be the society's principal divisions.

Several features are useful in identifying and classifying class coalitions in this strong sense. The first is a dual recognition; that an organic community does exist but within it there are discrete interests which have to be accommodated. This sense of an organic community bestows a degree of permanence -- beyond, say, mere arrangements between political forces for the duration of a parliament. Recognition that the community is differentiated (and may even become divided) along class lines formalises the idea of coalition. This dual recognition ensures that class coalitions in the strong sense have an existence in a much wider context than merely the formal political system. Economic, social, industrial, religious, cultural and even paramilitary groups give identity and form to sub-groups and special interests. They complement political parties and ensure a high degree of mobilisation to combat alternative allegiances and identities, while at the same time they can limit political leaders' freedom of action. Where class coalitions are in power, such forms of organisation also help in blurring the lines between the organs and functions of state and party, especially coercive ones.

If these features help to identify class coalitions, others help to classify them. Firstly, class coalitions may differ in the nature and degree of incorporation of their elements. Two models suggest themselves, representing the opposite

poles of hierarchy and autonomy. A class alliance might be a working arrangement between forces powerful in their own right, in which the partners retain a noticeable capacity for autonomous action. It might on the other hand result from a process of hierarchical incorporation in which some elements are kept firmly under control by others. The capacity for autonomous identity and action within a class coalition can be an important factor in its dynamics of maintenance and decay. Such possibilities prompt questions such as; to what extent do working class elements show a sense of class identity within class coalitions? To what extent are they capable of autonomous action? Do they have alternative choices or possible allies outside the confines of their situation? To what extent can they influence directions within it by direct action?

Secondly, if coalitions can differ in their structure, then it is likely that processes of formation can differ too. These processes might include coercion, the destruction of independent political power especially of working classes, prior to their subordinate incorporation. They might also include trading privilege for allegiance, and the elaboration and promotion of identities and ideologies. This feature usefully reveals the binding elements in coalitions. An important factor here might be whether or not coalitions represent the coming together of already-formed classes, or whether classes are formed in the process of incorporation.

A third feature involves the dynamics of coalitions, in the sense of their purposes and the driving forces which move them. Two tendencies might usefully be observed here. Some coalitions are driven predominantly by an external dynamic, in the sense of threats to a self-perceived group's autonomy and self-determination, to its culture and identity, and to its material welfare. Others are driven less by external

threat than by the need for a group to define and realise itself in political self-determination and economic development. In this way it could be useful to discriminate between aspirant and dominant coalitions. An important related topic is to assess which component of the coalition takes upon itself the task of defining goals (indeed of defining the group itself) and the degree of autonomy with which such leadership tasks can be undertaken. These points are also related to whether the coalition's internal state subsequent to its formation remains static or reflects trajectories of change.

The purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to discuss the nature of class coalitions in the context of the growth and rise to power of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism. In its formative years, Ulster Unionism brought together the principal classes to which Ulster Protestants belonged. Substantial landowners well-ensconced in the British aristocracy and conservative establishment were prominent among the leaders, as were the Anglo-Irish imperial and military caste with whom they substantially overlapped. After the collapse of the Liberal Party in rural Ulster in the mid-1880s, tenant farmers gave their support to Unionism. In the cities, a sometimes uneasy alliance between the Protestant working class and the business classes mobilised the financial⁹ and electoral resources on which Unionism was to depend.

Afrikaner Nationalism also brought together rural and urban interests. Agriculture was represented by substantial Cape wine and wheat farmers, and their maize-growing counterparts in the north. Nationalism's resources conspicuously lacked Unionism's developed industrial classes, and relied on those whom O'Meara evocatively calls 'cultural entrepreneurs' --

teachers, clerics, journalists -- for whom language was a resource and a weapon, to provide vanguard leadership.

Although both movements represented alliances between rural and urban interests, the main focus of this chapter will be on the incorporation of working-class elements into the coalitions. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, class politics threatens to expose ethnic or national movements to potentially devastating flank attack. Of all the elements in coalitions of this sort, working classes are the ones most exposed to competing and subversive conceptions of interest and solidarity, those most likely to take freedom of action upon themselves. Secondly, both Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism had to reproduce majority support in competitive electoral systems, and so working-class support was crucial for the reproduction of both movements. Thirdly, working-class elements have the reputation of being the most sectarian, the most racist and resistant to change in the respective coalitions. This aspect in particular will be important in explaining the decay of unity in both movements. For all these reasons, the integration of working classes into Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism was centrally important to the growth of these movements. Lastly, the phenomenon of the 'bounded working class'¹⁰ -- working class elements of dominant groups who define themselves in distinction to both 'their own' bourgeoisie and subordinate workers -- is the aspect of class coalitions which most explicitly contradicts class explanations of political allegiance and action, and hence poses interesting historical and political questions.

By reviewing the bodies of literature on class factors in the growth of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism then, it ought to be possible to compare why, how, and with what effect these two class coalitions came into being, and

how they were maintained. It ought to be possible moreover to compare them in terms of the relative autonomy of their components. Such a comparison will be a useful basis on which to consider their eventual break up.

THE FORMATION OF THE AFRIKANER NATIONALIST CLASS COALITION

Since the incorporation of white working-class elements into the Afrikaner Nationalist class coalition came to be viewed as a problem requiring explanation, rather than as part of the ineluctable process of national self-realisation, it has motivated the production of a sizable literature. As noted above, many of these studies have been carried out by neo-Marxist scholars, taking issue with 'liberal' accounts of the white working class, and seeking to remedy shortcomings in earlier Marxist versions.¹¹ The neo-Marxist versions have in turn attracted criticism,¹² while some contributions are less easy to classify.

A noticeable tendency in these conflicting accounts of the white working class and its relationship to Afrikaner Nationalism, is the way in which they focus on different periods. Broadly speaking, neo-Marxists, in their attempts to discredit what they see as 'whig' interpretations of an inevitably unfolding nationalism, and to emphasise the temporary and material nature of the forces which made up the nationalist alliance, tend to foreshorten the process of incorporation. Non-Marxists, or those who advocate synthetic explanations stressing not only material but also ethnic, cultural and ideological factors, tend to argue that it was a longer and more continuous process.¹³

Bearing this important difference in mind, there are four main points of emphasis in accounts of the incorporation of working class elements into the Afrikaner nationalist class

alliance. These are; the effects of the colonial origins of the South African state and society on class formation; the struggles between white labour and capital on the goldfields, culminating in the Rand Revolt of 1922; the efforts of the Pact government (1924-29) to solve the 'poor white' problem; the intensive incorporation specifically of working-class Afrikaners into the nationalist coalition, after the formation of the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (GNP) in 1934.

Colonial Origins and White Class Formation

Explaining the absence of a strong socialist movement across colour lines, Giliomee cites the centrality of South Africa's 'settler origins':

Unskilled Afrikaner workers entering the gold or diamond mines never forgot that they, like their fathers, commanded a position of authority and superiority over Africans in the pre-industrial period. That, together with the political power and better education they enjoyed, made them resist the rigid industrial discipline and abuse to which the Africans were subjected.¹⁴

Making the same general point, Marks and Trapido cite the fact that:

"Afrikaner workers brought with them a heritage of racist assumptions from the countryside which were frequently sharpened rather than undermined by the competition in town and the deliberate attempts of both capital and the state to manipulate the 'faultlines' of race in an effort to maintain a racially hierarchical division of labour and a divided working class.¹⁵"

Greenberg represents industrialisation and proletarianisation in South Africa as an enormous upheaval,

throwing together African peasants, Afrikaners forced from the land, and immigrants from all over the British Empire, "stirring together a seemingly endless variety of languages, cultures, skills and experiences". He continues;

..But the upheaval and emerging production relations had little impact on racial divisions that characterised European settlement in southern Africa from the seventeenth century. Assumptions that ruled the Colonial Office, the Kaffir Wars and Afrikaner farms were reconstructed for use in the mines and workshops.¹⁶

Neo-Marxists have been less forthcoming with explanations rooted in pre-industrial attitudes, but the overall effect is of confusion, rather than outright rejection. Davies for instance invokes "racist consciousness" as a partial explanation for the white workers' struggle for a colour bar in the early twentieth century:

.. In the twentieth century, as in the days of Kruger's republic, white workers who had nothing else to bargain with, came to consider that institutional privileges over their black fellow workers (whom their background taught them to regard as inferior) were vital.¹⁷ (emphases added)

It is not clear from the context whether the "racist consciousness" would have been as important if the workers had anything else to bargain with. Elsewhere, Davies asserts the existence and importance of "racial prejudice and ideology,"¹⁸ but criticises Simons and Simons¹⁹ in contradictory terms because although they recognise "..the fundamental relations of capitalist exploitation and class struggle", they view the white working class in terms of "unfolding consciousness and historical anthropology".²⁰

It is clear from a wide range of accounts, that the colonial context of South African industrialisation and class formation had an important role to play in preventing the emergence of a socialist movement which transcended racial boundaries. It also helped make white working-class people available for incorporation into a nationalist movement which elaborated and codified prejudice into explicit racial ideology.

Conflict Between White Labour, Capital and the State 1900-1922

Central to most explanations of the incorporation of white wage earners into the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance, is the assertion that subjugation was an important element in the process. During the first two decades of this century relations between capital and white labour on the gold mines were sharply antagonistic. These antagonisms had their roots in the nature of the gold mining industry under South African conditions.²¹ The main features were high capitalisation and highly concentrated ownership, while the colonial structure of South African society forced African wages down to a fraction of whites'. Since the price of gold was fixed by factors outside the control of the industry, costs, especially labour costs, determined profitability. This fact was essential to conflict on the goldfields. Under these circumstances, the ratio of high-waged white to low-waged black labour, the job colour bar and issues like deskilling and fragmentation were important in industrial conflicts which emerged during crises of profitability. Strikes in 1907, 1913 and 1914 marked particularly intense moments in this long-term antagonism.

Yudelman argues that in the early days of the South African state:

..a crisis of gold mining profits ...led inevitably to a crisis of the state itself: its legitimacy and economic viability were dependent on white employment and on gold mining revenue. Capital accumulation and state legitimation, then, were the major problems facing the fledgling South African state.²²

In order to resolve conflicts between accumulation and legitimation, the state had to intervene. The Transvaal government had done so sporadically and unevenly between 1902 and 1910, and like it, the Union government resorted to repression or incorporation as developing situations demanded. But when in 1921 the gold mining industry's cost crisis restated itself in forceful terms, both the imperative and the opportunity for more dramatic intervention and thoroughgoing reorganisation presented themselves:

Both the government and mining capital, each for its own reasons, wanted to subjugate the white workers; both were eventually prepared for violence if necessary. The economic crisis provided a compelling rationale for subjugation and generated popular support to make it feasible... For the government, however, subjugation was not an end in itself. It was clear that a more permanent solution would have to follow, in which state intervention of a less dramatic type would be institutionalised on a continuing basis.²³

Dealing with the same period, Davies argues that within a general context of "offensive struggles by mining capital" to reorganise the industry so that white employees could be restricted to "supervisory and mental functions", state policies had by 1919:

... succeeded in creating the objective conditions for the emergence of a sizeable

and significant white wage earning supportive class.²⁴

According to Davies, as the gold price fell after the war, the contradictions of the costs crisis in the industry were too great for;

.. mining capital in particular to be able to secure the kind of economic changes it needed to make at the expense of the white wage-earning classes and at the same time to maintain intact the ideological apparatuses which had functioned to secure the support of white wage earners for the form of state.²⁵

When the crisis reached open conflict in the Rand Revolt of 1922, the state revealed its partisan nature in the subjugation of the white mining unions. In this account, it was left to the alliance of the Nationalist and Labour parties in the Pact government to re-establish this support by incorporating the unions into a state-sponsored, bureaucratic system of industrial relations, and granting a number of economic concessions. Yudelman's account differs in that he denies that the Pact government represents a significant break in continuity with its predecessor, stating that the measures it took merely gave, "...more comprehensive and systematic form to the new industrial order whose foundations had been so securely laid by the South African Party government."²⁶ He is inclined moreover to stress the subjugation of the unions rather than the importance of the concessions and privileges granted to them by the Pact government.

Nonetheless, these two interpretations of the period agree that as a result of their subjugation, the mining unions were depoliticised, robbed of their potential as, "...an independent 'militant' social force"²⁷ and entered into a close and dependent relationship with the state.

The 'Poor White Problem' and the Making of the White Working Class

The coincidence between mining capital's need for large quantities of unskilled labour and the availability of an ultra-cheap, rightless and controllable labour force in the African population, condemned many thousands of unskilled whites to the status and material hardships of 'poor whiteism'. This numerous class of whites had been forced into the cities by war, drought, cattle disease, and the development of capitalist relations in the countryside. Its continued existence would threaten the stability and legitimacy of the state, but to accommodate its members on the mines would stretch the cost structure of the industry beyond endurance.

The 'poor whites' were in a sense up for grabs .. The historic possibilities ahead of them were several and the question of how to win them over and regain their loyalties in a class society exercised all the energies of competitive elites and ambitious politicians. They were as well a potentially untamed mob, a threat to the propertied.²⁸

The poor white problem was a staple ingredient in South African politics from the beginning of the century until a combination of racial protective legislation, the development of manufacturing industry and the effects of World War II solved it by the late forties. The issue was central to successive phases of a complex historical process of incorporating the white working class in a capitalist order in South Africa.

Before 1919, the state resorted to several strategies to incorporate unemployed white incomers to urban areas. These

included educational and training schemes to socialise whites into manual labour and to give them advantages over blacks; reservation of jobs in state employment; persuasion of employers in the private sector; schemes of land settlement. The Pact government relied on the use of state employment (especially on the railways) on the same pattern as previously, but in extended form. It also passed a package of measures (including the Wage Act, and Customs Tariff Act) aimed at encouraging the employment of whites in the private sector. The combined effect of these two arms of this 'civilised labour policy' was greatly to increase the absolute numbers of whites in working-class categories (especially the unskilled ones) and the proportion of white people thus employed. For instance, between 1924 and 1933, the proportion of unskilled white workers on the railways rose from 9.5% to 39.3% while that of Africans fell from 75% to 48.9%²⁹ According to O'Meara, by 1939 nearly 40% of Afrikaners were clustered in four occupational categories; unskilled labourer, mineworker, railway worker and bricklayer.³⁰

The measures taken by the Pact government did not solve the poor white problem. In fact, while there may have been between 150 000 and 200 000 poor whites when the Pact came to power in 1924,³¹ in 1932, one estimate put their numbers at 300 000.³² Nevertheless, by co-ordinating and extending previous measures, they did absorb significant numbers of whites into the political and economic systems. They also provided the pattern for further incorporation which would be brought about by economic growth in the boom years after the abandonment of the gold standard and the intensive efforts of the National Party both before and after it came to power in 1948.

The National Party and the White Working Class

The developments summarised thus far reflect two relatively continuous processes. In the first, white workers forfeited the capacity to confront the state or capital in return for a place within a bureaucratic system of industrial relations and a measure of privilege and protection. In the second, landless whites were transformed into urban workers, sponsored directly or indirectly by the state. These developments helped to underwrite white working-class support for the South African state, but did not reflect direct incorporation into a specific political movement. The political loyalties of white workers (including of course a growing number of Afrikaners) were divided among the main white political parties, especially the Labour Party. The project of securing the allegiance of the Afrikaner workers became an important preoccupation of Afrikaner Nationalists between 1934 and 1948.

The most comprehensive treatment of this subject is that of O'Meara.³³ The purpose of his account is to 'demystify' Afrikaner Nationalism and to locate it in the material world of social classes and the shifting alliances of class 'fractions', rather than as "...either the product of culture itself, or as the collective psychology of a culturally pre-defined group, 'Afrikanerdom'".³⁴ Central to this interpretation is the role played by the Broederbond as the representative of petty bourgeois³⁵ interests in the Transvaal, which were left isolated by fusion and the creation of the United Party in 1934. A measure of this isolation is the fact that only one Transvaal member of the Nationalist Party joined the GNP at this juncture.

During the 1930s, the Bond initiated two movements which were to give kultuurpolitiek a specific class content, politicising class cleavages in cultural terms and finally

succeeding in interpellating a new subject -- the Afrikaner volk. These were the assault on the trade unions, and the economic movement. The first mobilised working class support, whilst the second made explicit the economic basis and petty-bourgeois character of Afrikaner Nationalism.³⁶

In attempting to use trade unionism interpreted in ethnic and cultural terms, the Broederbond's principal objective was that newly-proletarianised Afrikaners would see their material interests in national rather than class terms, and thus be available to provide the mass base which would propel the GNP into power. The Mineworkers' Union (MWU) was the centrepiece of the Broederbond's effort. The mining industry's strategic position in the economy was one incentive for this choice, as was the fact that white miners' wages were determined by the productivity of the gangs of African workers they supervised:

With a direct economic interest in the intensified exploitation of African workers, there was thus little chance that white miners would seek to organise or identify their interests with the African workers over whom they exerted daily supervision and control on behalf of mining capitalists.³⁷

In addition, among white miners, Afrikaners were clustered at the lower levels of skill, and the union's leadership was both corrupt, and unusually compliant towards the employers. As Yudelman puts it:

By the time of World War II, organised white mine labour was an insignificant force in South Africa, particularly in economic and industrial terms. Formerly the most organised and militant section of the white labour force, it was thoroughly co-opted, depoliticised and riven by internal dissent and corruption.³⁸

In the struggle to mobilise trade union members for nationalism, the main instrument was the Nasionale Raad van Trustees (NRT), a front organisation which financed rivals to established trade unions, or, in the case of the miners, a reformers' group to wrest power from the existing leadership. Neither the NRT nor any other organisation devoted to organising Afrikaner workers on specifically national lines was the result of independent action by workers themselves; all were inspired, financed, led and maintained by petty-bourgeois groups.

O'Meara's judgement is that although the Broederbond's assault on the trade unions was completely successful only in the case of the MWU, the casting of white workers' material interests in ethnic terms allowed the HNP to extend its electoral base. The six mining constituencies which the HNP won in the 1948 election are often cited as the decisive gain which allowed the Nationalists to win. The struggle to mobilise Afrikaner workers had been long drawn-out, was incompletely realised, and in it, the workers themselves had been objects rather than subjects.

The Pattern of Incorporation of Working-Class Whites in the Afrikaner Nationalist Class Alliance

The pattern of incorporation of working-class whites in the Afrikaner Nationalist class alliance can be summarised in terms of four themes.

The first theme is the context of colonial settlement and the continuing imperial factor in South African politics. Together these helped produce conditions in which the working class was not only divided, but doubly divided, between black and white, and Afrikaans and English speaking

elements. Simons and Simons note the rich variety of working-class identities:

Ambitious working men could appeal to class interests against employers or to racial sentiments against Africans and Asians; combine with Britishers against 'the Boer' or with Afrikaners against 'the capitalist'.³⁹

In this colonial context, "...the fundamental question of equal political and economic rights for blacks was never seriously considered or debated among the white government or white electorate".⁴⁰ This meant that at least until the 1940s, relationships between the state, capital and white labour could take place without the threat of black political aspirations directly impinging to shape them.

The continuation of the imperial factor in South African politics in questions like the symbols and substance of South African sovereignty, the ultimate allegiance of its citizens, the connections between imperial capital and South African political parties, and South Africa's participation in the Second World War, meant that Afrikaner workers could easily be approached in ethnic terms. Lack of proficiency in English often held Afrikaners back in the economy and white poverty during the Depression was largely confined to Afrikaners. As Giliomee puts it:

It was this context that made Afrikaner poverty such an emotional issue, allowing ethnic mobilisers to hold British imperialism responsible for the condition of their people, rather than accepting it as part of the generally painful process of industrialisation and of the breakdown of the Western economic order.⁴¹

The Afrikaner worker, the Broederbond argued, was not exploited as a worker but as an Afrikaner; it was not that

capitalism was wrong, but in the wrong hands; the employer was not of the same volk as the worker; "...were Afrikaners in charge, exploitation would wither away in the cooperative organic unity of the volk".⁴² As for trade unions, in 1939, Albert Herzog claimed that 80% of members were Afrikaners, but only 10% of the secretaries. O'Meara⁴³ says this is an exaggeration, but concedes the general point about exclusion and discrimination.

The coincidence of ethnic division with discrepancies in status and material reward within the white working class, superimposed on the division between black and white, was influential in making Afrikaner workers available for mobilisation along with other major social groups in the Nationalist class alliance.

The second theme is the early and far-reaching subjugation of the white labour movement which helped structure the conditions under which Afrikaner workers were later incorporated. As argued above, blacks did not pose a political threat to white rule in this period, but under the conditions of the mining industry, they posed a threat to the economic interests of white miners. In this situation there was no obvious harmony of interests between white employers and white labour, such as both might have recognised if white rule was to be imminently threatened by the organisation and advance of black political aspirations.

In fact, the bitter antagonisms which marked relations between mining capital, white workers and the state in the first two decades of this century, and which were caused at least in part by the threat to white workers of cheap black labour, showed not only that the independent power of militant white workers had to be subjugated, but that such a harmony of interests then had to be created. It was not so

much the fear that white and black workers would combine, or that blacks would speedily organise to advance claims to equality, but that in a confrontation with militant white labour, the coercive powers and reserves of legitimacy of the fledgling South African state would be speedily exhausted. This might offer both demonstration effect and opportunity for insurrection to the hundreds of thousands of African migrant workers in the mine compounds, who outnumbered the white population of the Witwatersrand.⁴⁴

This harmony was created by the incorporation of white labour after 1922. It was a forced harmony, based on the subordination of one of the parties, and a recognition by the others (mining capital and the state) that it would be politically counter-productive to push advantages through to their logical conclusion. Because it was the forced harmony of incorporation, not the alliance of parties powerful in their own right and who retained wide freedom of action, it was a highly formal one. Its formality was reflected in the apparatus of Industrial Conciliation Acts, the legislative provisions of the civilised labour policy and the instruments excluding Africans from industrial rights.

The third theme concerns the materials out of which a working class component of the Nationalist class alliance was composed. Subjugated white miners occupying protected, deskilled, supervisory roles over African labour formed one component while semi-skilled operatives in the fast-growing manufacturing industries provided the other. The vast majority of workers in both groups were Afrikaners.⁴⁵ Both were recruited to a large extent from the ranks of 'poor whites'. They were not attracted away from pre-existing allegiances of long-standing to a larger self-conscious social class -- 'the working class', or 'the white working class' -- or from some conception of themselves

constituting a self-consciously organised ethnic class -- the 'Afrikaner working class'. Rather than entering the nationalist alliance in some such corporate form, on its own terms and under its own leadership, the people who were attracted into Christian National trade unions and who voted for the HNP in 1948, came in large measure from a background devoid of self-conscious, autonomous political organisation. Writing of the state's efforts to alleviate 'poor whiteism' before 1922, Davies says:

It must be emphasised that in acting in this way the state was not principally responding to the economic demands of 'poor whites' themselves. The 'poor whites' were, at least initially, an extremely disorganised stratum with little power of their own to enforce even limited economic demands.⁴⁶

Charles van Onselen takes issue with this view arguing (in a study which takes 1914 as its closing point) that marginalised urban Afrikaners (he avoids the term 'poor whites') were not as disorganised and powerless as Davies' assessment suggests.⁴⁷ Van Onselen supports his case with instances when unemployed Afrikaners were able through marches, demonstrations and confrontations with employers, municipal and state officials to obtain relief and relief work. What is more, he credits them with a 'working class consciousness' that enabled them to resist incorporation into a nationalist labour movement inspired by Het Volk in 1910. The examples he takes, however, seem more like crisis-driven moments of resistance than the products of continuous organisation. Van Onselen himself comments, in discussing the search of the Afrikaner poor for 'political shelter' that, "...perhaps it is inevitable that, under capitalism, the poor and unemployed should be politically homeless".⁴⁸ His own reference to the later history of unskilled

Afrikaner workers suggests the brevity and fragility of their "aggressive working class consciousness":

That in the succeeding decades the same workers should have fallen prey to the nets of a narrow nationalism is one of the many tragedies of modern South Africa.⁴⁹

Certainly, references to organisation and consciousness among poor whites in discussions of the later period are conspicuous by their absence. O'Meara states that Christian National ideologists:

..always claimed that they were in the business of 'rescuing' Afrikaner workers from 'poor whiteism'. In practice, few or no attempts were made to organise 'poor whites'. The majority of attacks on trade unions were directed at those whose members could in no way be considered 'poor whites', but were in fact chosen for their relative prosperity.⁵⁰

In the accounts of the period then (especially those of Davies and O'Meara), the workers who came to be incorporated into the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition were of two principal types. The first was composed of supervisory wage earners in the mining industry and the second, semi-skilled workers in new manufacturing industries and state-protected employment in railways, iron, and steel. Large numbers of both types were recruited into industrial roles from backgrounds which reflected rural displacement and impoverishment. At the same time, an emergent and aspirant class of 'ideological entrepreneurs' was conducting a vigorous campaign to proselytize on behalf of Afrikaner identity and install it as the primary mode of consciousness among these newcomers to industrial life.

The fourth theme reflects the important role of this emergent class. The incorporation of Afrikaner workers did

represent a defensive project to some extent, since in colonial South Africa all whites were to some extent members of a dominant caste. But much more importantly, this was a transformative and not merely a defensive project. The Afrikaner Nationalist class coalition faced the problem not only of preserving Afrikaner interests against black advance, but of advancing Afrikaner interests by creating an Afrikaner capitalist class from the struggling petty bourgeoisie, and a fully fledged working class from impoverished rural whites. This self-imposed task had to be undertaken in the teeth of English cultural hegemony and the dominance of the economy by 'English' capital.

In summary then, the incorporation of working class elements into the Afrikaner Nationalist class alliance reflected the influence of a colonial context in the persistence of notions of racial hierarchy from the countryside to the industrial workplace and in the importance of the imperial factor which made Afrikaner workers receptive to interpretations of their material conditions in ethnic terms. Incorporation was preceded by the conclusive subjugation of white working-class militancy by capital and the state and the creation of elaborate discriminatory schemes of state-sponsored protection and advancement for white workers. These conditions made it possible for Afrikaner Nationalists successfully to incorporate already-co-opted workers and those newly proletarianised by courtesy of state sponsorship, into a transformatory class coalition.

THE FORMATION OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST CLASS COALITION

In the years between 1886 when the first Home Rule Bill was defeated and 1920 when the Government of Ireland Act partitioned the country, Ulster Unionism, the coalition which expressed opposition to Irish nationalism, was formed.

It was this alliance which forced the partition of Ireland and underpinned the regional government in Northern Ireland which lasted until 1972.

By the time the alliance was formed, the north-east of Ireland, and especially Belfast, had experienced widespread and intensive industrialisation, first in factory production of textiles, and from the mid-nineteenth century, in shipbuilding and engineering.⁵¹ By 1901, 46% of the male population was employed in engineering, shipbuilding, linen and the textile finishing sector. At the same time, female employment was also very important. The ratio of women to men in the textile industry was 3:1, and more than 43% of women and girls over ten years old were in employment, compared to 32% in the rest of the United Kingdom.⁵²

In this context of rapid industrialisation there was ample scope for class conflict over a wide range of issues, from wages to unemployment, trade union recognition and rights, poor housing, epidemics and industrial disease.⁵³ Given the condition of the Belfast working classes in this period, it is all the more remarkable that:

Not only was Ulster Unionism distinguished for its vehemence, it was also distinguished for its cohesion. From 1886 until just recently, a surprising unionist front was maintained in the north of Ireland. It cut across class barriers. Landowners, tenant farmers, businessmen, artisans and labourers, all combined in this movement, and many commentators have remarked upon the co-operation shown by such diverse social and economic groups in sustained political action.⁵⁴

Central to the maintenance of this front, was the integration into it of Protestant members of the working

class. This historical development had a number of distinctive features which might be summarised as follows; the formation of the class alliance did not occur entirely spontaneously and purely as a reaction to the rise of Irish nationalism, but as part of a longer process; relations within and between classes during this period of industrialisation were affected by pre-existing patterns of relationship in the countryside; the Protestant working-class elements which were integrated (or subordinated) into the Unionist coalition possessed traditions of independent electoral and direct action in both sectarian and labourist directions; whatever the differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic workers, they were not such as to make common action unthinkable.

These features in turn helped to shape the process by which the movement was formed, the place and role of the various components of the alliance, and the nature of the social, political and economic system over which it presided for 50 years.

The Chronology of Ulster Unionism

Responding to what he sees as inadequacies in the historiography of Ulster Unionism, Gibbon analyses the movement in terms of much longer processes than mere reaction to the threat of Home Rule:

Ulster Unionism did not spring perfect and complete, as Athena from the head of Zeus, from the home rule crises of 1886, 1892 and 1912. On the contrary, like all substantial social movements, it had been 'prepared for' historically by the development -- albeit by divergent paths -- of all the elements it was to combine.⁵⁵

The most important of these elements, according to Gibbon's account, were Unionism's regional character, sectarian status and all-class composition. These characteristics and the dualistic antagonisms into which they were locked (Ulster/Ireland, Protestant/Catholic, Unionist/Nationalist), were based on differing modes of production in Ireland. The north was characterised by machine production and the south by extensive commercial farming. These in turn were based on divergent experiences of settler colonialism:

In the north-east a society of colons of British origin farmed holdings of more or less uniformly small size. In the south a few scattered colons grazed or sub-let large estates.⁵⁶

The crucial element in the diversification of these small agricultural holdings into textile production was,

..the relation between the low level and high generality of colon capitalisation which followed specifically from the character of the petty commodity-producing agriculture which the immigrants brought with them.⁵⁷

(emphasis in original)

It was on the basis of this domestic, income-supplementing textile production, that the skilled labour (and to some extent the capital) for the transition to machine production was found, and the trajectory of development begun that was to see the later growth of engineering and shipbuilding.

Gibbon does not rest content with arguing that the facts of uneven development underpinned the division of Ireland by tying the north-east counties with capitalist bonds to the empire. Within this overall framework, he asserts, there were complex processes of political and ideological struggle, in which class alliances were formed and reformed:

..prior to the home rule crisis, Ulster possessed a structured popular politics, a structured system of class alliances and a structured set of political and crypto-political ideologies. These comprised the raw material upon which the crisis acted and out of which a new quasi-nationalist political party eventually emerged. Ulster Unionism, when it appeared, represented a modification of existing class alliances and ideologies.⁵⁸

Among the elements shaping these early alliances, was the importation into the city of processes and relationships from the countryside.

Relationships in the Countryside and the Formation of Class Alliances in the City

The effect of pre-industrial conflicts is summarised by Hepburn and Collins. Industrialisation and urbanisation according to them had, "minimal impact on the essential character of community conflict". Belfast, in this view brought a "simply new and in due course dominant element to a much older conflict".⁵⁹ In this new environment:

..harsh working conditions and tight competition for jobs helped perpetuate and intensify old rural battles between Ulster Catholics and Protestants in a new setting.⁶⁰

This phenomenon had a direct impact on the formation of the Unionist alliance. In a reinterpretation of the origins of Orangeism in the late eighteenth century, Gibbon⁶¹ analyses this most important form of sectarian organisation in popular Protestant politics. It remains important to the present day as a means of mobilising, showing solidarity, maintaining identity and confronting Catholic aspirations.

The economic circumstances hospitable to the growth of Orangeism were occasioned by the growth of demand in domestic linen production which opened the labour market to Catholics, especially in Armagh. The Orange Order was the Protestant weavers' vehicle for restricting the industry to Protestants. It was not that there was a shortage of employment:

Rather, an unrestricted labour market was the occasion of the breaking of the economic barrier between Protestants and Catholics which appeared to underlie the entire system of social inequality. Faced with a threat to the principle of homogeneity which determined the character of the social relations of the community and its relations with the world as a whole, the weavers appropriated to themselves the powers of enforcing what they understood to be an integral part of the 1691 settlement. In doing so they were reported to be acting under the belief that they were enforcing the penal laws.⁶²

Feeding on traditional rural phenomena like feuding and the vengeance group, the Orange Order became formalised (making extensive use of freemason-like ritual) as an instrument for intimidating and evicting Catholics. It became expedient, in the interests both of the order itself and sections of the landlord class, to institutionalise and use it as a basis of renewed social compact. For the order, it meant the landlords' approval and for the landlords a means of establishing control over forces whose activities had the potential to turn against them. By 1798, Orangemen were being admitted to the militia, in which role they were prominent in putting down the United Irishmen's rebellion of that year. In this way, popular initiatives and ruling class control were run together in a way that was to remain characteristic of Ulster Unionism, as was the blurring of the distinction between private and public forces of coercion.

Orangeism made its way to the towns along with the transition to machine industry not, Gibbon argues, as a result of 'contagion' or 'migration', but because, "...simply of the existence in towns of specific conditions making their populations receptive to such changes".⁶³ Whatever the case, Orangeism was a powerful instrument in reproducing relationships of nepotism, patronage and brokerage between employers and workers, especially in the older textile mill ghetto of Sandy Row. These relationships were at their height during the second phase of Ulster's industrialisation (transition to factory production of textiles) from about 1830-60.

The third phase, the development of shipbuilding and engineering, brought with it a different set of relationships, structured by the very different material conditions of work for the 'labour aristocracy' of 'islandmen' in the shipyards.⁶⁴ The Orange Order was prominent and important in the shipyards, and in the new areas which housed the workers, the Shankill in west Belfast, and Ballymacarrett in the east. But the islandmens' high earnings and relatively free conditions of labour allowed for more cosmopolitan, less deferential relationships between workers and owners, in which the binding ideology became social imperialism rather than confessional nepotism. If Orangeism never again as faithfully and consistently reproduced the patron-client relationships of the countryside in the town, nonetheless some of the qualities remained. They reasserted themselves as factors in the fluctuating contours of class alliances, especially in times of depression when the possibilities of working-class independence shrank.

Sectarian and Labourist Expressions of Protestant Working-Class Independence

Perhaps the most singular feature of the Ulster Unionist class alliance has been the degree of independent identity and sometimes action shown by its Protestant working-class components. By showing themselves capable of subordination and deference on the one hand and militant populism on the other, Protestant workers have invited confusion and misinterpretation. Their conflicts with bourgeois leadership in the period when the Unionist class alliance was being consolidated in the anti-home rule period were of two kinds; firstly, sectarian-populist, and secondly, labourist.

Early expressions of working-class dissidence had much to do with the vicissitudes of the Orange Order in the early and mid-19th century. Viewed with suspicion by many of the upper classes because of its wild and vulgar associations, and by the British administration in Ireland for its provocative role in the endemic violence which sorely tried the rulers' resources, it was often threatened by legislation against secret societies in the 1820s, and even endured a period of dissolution after 1836.⁶⁵ A particular source of Orange grievance was the Party Processions Act (1850), which forbade provocative demonstrations of the sort which were integral to popular politics in Ireland, especially in the north. This measure was the troublesome kind of law which is very difficult to enforce and at the same time, calculated to incite defiance. Throughout the 1860s, it was a focus for Orange discontent, not only towards the government for promulgating it, but also towards the Order's own Grand Lodge for accepting it. The discontent took on wider ramifications in 1868 when one of the principal agitators, William Johnston of Ballykillbeg Co. Down was imprisoned.⁶⁶

This incident crystallised the discontents of newly-enfranchised urban artisans who formed the Protestant Working Mens' Association with the aim of returning Johnston (a small landowner and novelist, perpetually in financial difficulties) to parliament as 'their representative', an aim which was duly achieved in the same year.

Historians agree that neither Johnston's election nor his subsequent career exemplified class consciousness in any strict or commonly accepted meaning of the term. For Patterson, this "dissident working class conservatism";

..mobilised disparate conflicts and ideologies. The elements of class resentment were not a reflection of the labour process alone, but were mediated by the specific ideologies of Belfast's urban elite....(who) demanded a sectional expression for what they regarded as their crucial role in making the town a 'conservative citadel'.⁶⁷

For Gibbon, the Protestant Working Mens' Association "..with its astonishing combination of class hatred, sectarianism and deference, expressed diverse and inconsistent intentions".⁶⁸ Patterson illustrates this diversity by pointing out that Orangeism could function not only to integrate Protestants politically, but to "..give a specific if limited articulation to class conflict.." ⁶⁹ and by stressing that the anti-bourgeois element in Johnston's campaign was not only a question of class antagonism, but an assertion of sectarian militancy in defence of Protestant principles, notably the right to march: "The bourgeoisie were attacked not only as exploiters but also because of their obvious distaste for urban violence and law breaking".⁷⁰

It was not long before Johnston was devoting himself to the reform of Belfast conservatism, advocating collaboration

rather than dissidence, and achieving an agreement under which one of the Belfast parliamentary seats would go to a member of the conservative working classes.⁷¹

After Johnston's death in 1902, his parliamentary seat was successfully contested by Thomas Sloan in the same broad interest of sectarian populism. Sloan was a small-scale subcontractor in the shipyards (he described himself as "an employer and a worker"), and an evangelical preacher. His reputation as a sectarian agitator caused anxiety in the ranks of respectable Orangeism and moves to isolate and discipline him led to a split in the Orange Order. This saw Sloan and his followers form the Independent Orange Order, a movement as ambiguous and contradictory as the populism of Johnston and his followers.

Unlike earlier manifestations of sectarian populism however, the Independent Orange Order attempted to come to terms with the most fundamental problem facing any independent initiatives from the Protestant working class. This attempt was largely the work of Lindsay Crawford, a journalist and editor;

Crawford realised that any successful campaign for independent Protestant working class representation was bound to introduce an element of political instability in the north, and that in that situation the Catholic community simply could not be ignored. Protestant radicals had to accept that there were social demands held in common by Orangemen and Nationalists, and that if necessary they could ally to wrest basic reforms from the government.⁷²

The document which contained this reasoning, the Magheramorne Manifesto,⁷³ prepared for the Independents' Twelfth of July celebrations in 1905, has a disputed

significance in histories of this period. In effect, the manifesto spoke out in favour of a secular nationalism, purged of mainland British and Roman Catholic influence. Whatever the conflicting views about the place of the manifesto in the Independents' ideology, the fluctuating fortunes of the Order highlight the difficulties of independent working-class initiatives within Ulster Unionism. In particular, Crawford's invitation to Protestants to reconsider the question of their identity and the whole range of their relationships, both within the Unionist class alliance, and across it to Catholics, illustrates the narrow limits of an identity which tries to be both sectarian and independent. In the face of determined mobilisation of the Protestant population by the forces of official Unionism (the main agent of this, the Ulster Unionist Council, was set up in 1905, the year of the Magheramorne Manifesto) the Independent Orange Order was overshadowed, and by 1908, the year of Crawford's expulsion from it, had been thoroughly marginalised.

Orange populism was not the only example of independent working-class politics in this era. Given that Belfast was one of the empire's great industrial cities, it is hardly surprising that socialist ideas and movements made their appearance. The form that they took in Belfast had, of course, to come to terms with the specific patterns of ideological, class and political struggle which colonialism and uneven development had brought to this part of Ireland. These included a divided working class, a nationalist struggle, and collaborative relationships between working class Protestants and 'their' bourgeoisie. In this context, the labour politics which developed had a number of characteristics.⁷⁴ Firstly, they were reformist, stressing the possibilities of local government in bringing about improvements in transport, housing, and public amenities.

Secondly, labour politics in this era were dominated by skilled (and hence Protestant) workers. Thirdly, all significant Belfast labour representatives of the time stood by the maintenance of the Union, and in terms of their own organisation and strategies, saw themselves as operating in a British context as part of the wider labour movement.

It is in the third of these characteristics that the principal contradictions of Belfast labourism emerge. As Patterson points out, the strategy of integration with the British labour movement was problematic, given the latter's home rule sympathies.⁷⁵ Even more important than this, was the difficulty of distancing labour politics from conservative unionism, once the decision to maintain the Union was made. These contradictions were eloquently vested in the person of William Walker. Walker was a carpenter by trade and a trade unionist by avocation, who was the leading figure in Belfast labour politics in the first decade of this century, holding high office in the Belfast Trades Council (the principal vehicle for labour politics) and the Irish Trades Union Congress. So prominent was he, that he gave his name to the package of ideologies and strategies summarised above -- 'Walkerism'.

The basis of the Belfast labour movement which Walker represented, and the source of its ambiguities, lay in the Protestant dominance of skilled trades, especially in shipbuilding and engineering. In 1901,⁷⁶ when the proportion of Catholics in the city of Belfast was 24%, they made up only 10,7% of the five principal skilled categories in machine industry⁷⁷ and they were overrepresented in unskilled labour categories (32% of 'general labourers' were Catholics). The Belfast Trades Council was dominated by skilled workers in small and medium firms, while the skilled shipyard workers tended to hold themselves aloof and work

through the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The sectionalism, craft unionism and sectarianism of the shipyard workers were obstacles in the way of leaders (like Walker) of independent labour politics in Belfast.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Walker's defence of the union from a labour point of view was one put forward on behalf of all skilled workers. This programme and the contradictions which fatally undermined it, were best expressed in Walker's three unsuccessful attempts to win the parliamentary seat of North Belfast between 1905 and 1907.⁷⁹

Walker's main point was that the Union was essential for the economic development on which the skilled jobs of the Belfast working class and the 'municipal socialism' which he himself aspired to lead both depended. By contrast, the nationalism of the underdeveloped south was reactionary, parochial and obscurantist. The best defence of the Union was to abandon reactionary Unionism and embrace progressive social reform in parliament and local government. Unionism with Labour in the vanguard would be seen to be in the interests of all Irish people. However, the two elements at the heart of this position were incompatible. Walker's labourism stressed class and his Unionism accepted home rule as the central issue. But if this was the case, he could not easily justify introducing class, a subject which could split the Unionist vote, into electoral competition.

Walker's vulnerability on this kind of issue was demonstrated when during the North Belfast by-election of 1905, he was induced to answer a questionnaire put to candidates by an extremist Protestant group. Thus cornered, Walker gave uniformly sectarian answers, culminating in the following evasive exchange:

Finally when asked 'Will you in all things place the interests of Protestantism before

those of the party to which you are attached?' He replied, 'Protestantism means protesting against superstition and hence true Protestantism is synonymous with Labour'.⁸⁰

Walker's answers were widely distributed on a handbill, and the effect probably lost him the Catholic votes in the constituency, and the seat. The very choice of North Belfast as a seat to contest, it should be added, illuminates the limits of Belfast labour politics:

In East Belfast, there had been no contest since 1892 and Wolff, a large employer and patron of local Orangeism, was a formidable candidate. In the West, where in voting strength the sectarian balance was even, the problems for a labour candidate, who would inevitably be charged with splitting the Protestant vote, would have been severe. In the South the election of Sloan meant splitting the possible labour vote.⁸¹

Walkerism and the Independent Orange Order represented in their different ways a durable strain in Unionist politics. This was the attempt to find space for a wide range of interests, from ultra-sectarianism through populism to limited class-consciousness and reformist social democracy, within a framework which acknowledged the primacy of the Union, and resistance to Home Rule. Ultimately, each attempt had to recognise that the space afforded by the primacy of the national question was a narrow one indeed. This strain did not however die out with the completion of the Ulster Unionist coalition and the successful preservation of the Union in Northern Ireland. Both sectarian populism and 'loyal' labourism continued to seek expression, especially in times of political or economic crisis, but they were to come up against the same constricting realities as their predecessors.

The Possibilities of United Working Class Action

A notable feature of the Ulster Unionist class coalition, especially in comparative context, is that although it marked in some respects a division between settler and native, this separation was in no sense as absolute and as formal as in other colonial situations. Differential legal statuses, and formal prohibitions (on landholding say, or in employment) were no longer part of British rule by the late 19th century. Catholics did not represent a low-wage, super-exploited labour force held by repressive laws to a formally inferior status.⁸² It is true that there were elements of racism in the divide between the populations, as Lee has discussed.⁸³ But however widespread private suspicions and beliefs about the inferiority of Catholics were, official Unionist ideology avoided the determinism they implied. It was not so much that Catholics were incapable of being good, productive, loyal citizens of the empire, it was that they perversely chose not to be and to follow priests and agitators into disloyalty instead.

Similarly, whatever the private feelings of Catholics, and the pronouncements of some of the more bigoted clerics, Irish nationalism insisted on the wholeness of the Irish nation, and the importance of Ulster Protestants in completing it.

In the economic sphere, none of Ulster's industries required the mass of rightless, controlled, cheap labourers which only a more numerous native population could provide, and which typifies colonial economies. It is true that the Belfast working class was divided and that Protestants dominated the skilled occupations. The divisions reached into the unskilled as well. In Belfast docks for instance,

work in the cross channel berths, which was more regular and had higher status and better conditions, was monopolised by Protestants.⁸⁴ In the deep-sea berths, where work was intermittent and harder, Catholic dockers overwhelmingly predominated. Despite this, the 1910 census figures quoted above show that although Catholics were disproportionately represented in the ranks of the unskilled, 68% of unskilled labourers were Protestants.

Despite competing identities and mutual suspicions between Protestant and Catholic then, neither ideological nor material conditions have been such that a common class consciousness between workers from both sides of the sectarian divide has been unthinkable. Indeed socialists and nationalists have always been ready to applaud on the most meagre evidence any sign of Protestant workers acting in their 'true' interests, while Unionists are ready to denounce the same actions as betrayal to Irish nationalism.

In the period of the Unionist coalitions's formation, the question of a common class consciousness between Protestant and Catholic was raised by the Belfast dock strike of 1907. The strike arose from James Larkin's efforts to organise Belfast dockers for the National Union of Dock Labourers. It began with a demand by the (mainly Protestant) cross-channel dockers for a closed shop, and broadened to include issues of pay and conditions, drawing in the (Catholic) deep-sea dockers and, in sympathy, the carters who distributed goods in the city once they were landed. Although those on strike never exceeded 3 500, strike meetings attracted anything up to 10 000, and the biggest demonstration totalled 100 000. Support came from the Independent Orange Order, from Walker and the Belfast socialists, and from Joseph Devlin, the most important Irish nationalist leader in Belfast. Violence surrounding picketing and blacklegging and a police mutiny

(occasioned partly by the demanding and distasteful work of protecting blacklegs), encouraged the civil authorities to call in the military, which in turn brought riots in nationalist areas, provoked by the sight of the occupying army on the streets of Belfast. During these disturbances, the army shot dead two people.

The most complete account of the strike argues that the riots represented a crucial blow to the strike's chances of success:

The riots created a new atmosphere. There had been no actual sectarian fighting, but sectarian fears and suspicions had been aroused ..This division, this change of atmosphere, was a critical blow to the strike movement.⁸⁵

Belfast employers proved themselves quite capable of encouraging this sectarian atmosphere, which was ensured by the continued presence of the military. It was however the readiness of British labour leaders to make concessions amounting to an admission of defeat on the strikers' behalf, which formally ended the strike.

In the context of Belfast politics, perhaps the 1907 strike was impressive enough. Protestant and Catholic unskilled workers acted in pursuit of the same goals. Large non-sectarian crowds supported the strikers, and so did the Independent Orange Order, Walker and the BTC, even the nationalists. Strike leaders insisted that the orange and the green, home rule and the Union were not at issue in this struggle for workers' rights. As tension mounted in Catholic areas with the introduction of troops, Protestant strikers patrolled the interface between Protestant and Catholic trying to calm Protestant crowds who tried to get involved.

Yet there is no evidence that these things presaged or promised any change of consciousness on either side. Each part of the alliance that supported the strikers had its own agenda; the violence, although occasioned by protection for blacklegs in Catholic areas, was of a pronouncedly nationalist flavour; despite the efforts of strike leaders, hostile Protestant crowds made provocative demonstrations aimed at the Catholic rioters.

Nothing, in short, gave good reason to suppose that the sectarian mould of Belfast politics was going to be broken by class politics across the religious divide. It is one of the enduring myths of left-wing views on Ireland that this was possible, that,

..the strike represented the possibility of a withdrawal of working class support for the two complexes of ideology which dominated Irish society: Protestant unionism and Catholic nationalism.⁸⁶

This myth, in Patterson's view, stems from a long-standing misunderstanding of working class Unionism, in which even militant trade unionism could co-exist with a strong rejection of nationalism with its connotations of backwardness and priestly domination. These beliefs in turn fed on traditions which were rooted in the conditions of existence of the Protestant working class and were not merely the product of bourgeois manipulation.

For Gray, the strike revealed the enormous potential and crippling limitations of independent Protestant working class action.

If, then, the 1907 dispute revealed in full array the capacity for Protestant workers to provide a formidable vanguard in industrial

agitation, it also illustrated the limitations of such agitation, as the powerful impact of the workers' actions raised issues which threatened other compelling supremacist imperatives. In recoiling from this discovery, they hastened to their own defeat.⁸⁷

The failure of cross-class identity and action to develop in Belfast during the period when the Unionist class coalition was completed is all the more striking given the lack of ambiguity about Protestant workers' status in class terms. Whatever privileges they enjoyed in terms of dominating the skilled trades, they were not a 'colonial' labour aristocracy, in the sense of enjoying a different legal and political status from 'natives'. Nor did they occupy an ambiguous place in the division of labour as supervisors and controllers of 'native' labour, and while it was true that they feared Catholic competition for skilled jobs, they were not threatened by large scale deskilling and regrading which would put them at the mercy of capitalists' cheap labour policies. Their capacity for independent action, yet their unwillingness or inability to take that independence beyond a point which would threaten the compact with other Protestant classes, makes them a particularly difficult case to accommodate in class explanations of politics.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMATION OF THE AFRIKANER NATIONALIST AND ULSTER UNIONIST CLASS COALITIONS

Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism indeed present similar cases of a set of workers, "identified politically and morally far more closely with its own bourgeoisie than co-workers". In each, this was the essential feature of the movement. Only by drawing support from all classes under conditions of democracy or quasi-democracy⁸⁸ could these movements maintain themselves in power, and in fact ensure

the survival of 'their' states. Their all-class nature allowed each to make claims to embody a people, not a conspiracy. This quality was essential for the claims to legitimacy through self-determination fashioned by each for external and internal consumption. Mass support was essential not only at the polls, but to provide the personnel to run the bureaucratic and coercive arms of state on a partial basis, quelling opposition and allowing the state to reproduce itself.

In both cases, the repeated demonstration of an all-class appeal contributed to the 'monolith' of popular imagining, an image all the more powerful because it was exemplified not only at the polls, but also in a broad range of social, cultural and religious structures which supported the formal political parties. This popular myth of organic unity has had to be refined however, especially under the impact of neo-Marxist ideas. This in turn has made it possible to compare and refine the class coalition idea in the two cases.

The preceding discussions of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism as class coalitions suggest a four-point working model for comparison. The first consideration is the place accorded to working class representation in the political parties which were the standard-bearers of these movements. The second is the combination of means used to ensure the cohesion of the movements. The third is the relation between the processes of forging political unity and those of class formation. The fourth is the respective explanatory weights assigned to external and internal factors in bringing different classes together. Threats from other social groups to the interests of Afrikaners and Ulster Protestants represent external factors, and projects of social transformation -- typified by urbanisation and

upward mobility -- exemplify what is meant by internal factors.

Working Class Incorporation into the Ulster Unionist Party and the Afrikaner National Party

Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism were similar in that working-class elements were incorporated into class coalitions in clearly subordinate roles. Neither movement was characterised by internal, participatory democracy; working-class representatives were not consistently active in formulating social programmes and pushing for them from within; working-class figures rarely, if ever achieved leadership positions.

The undemocratic nature of the Ulster Unionist Party is well documented.⁸⁹ Although from time to time efforts were made to give the appearance of rank-and-file involvement by extending representation on the Ulster Unionist Council, the movement's governing body,⁹⁰ these were largely cosmetic. By the time of partition, the council itself was largely bypassed in favour of a caucus of leaders in the government, parliament and the party organisation.

The only useful purpose it served in the 1920s and 1930s was to provide a rally at which the party leader paid due tribute to the work of the rank and file, and whipped up enthusiasm for the policies of the government. In this way, control of the party was concentrated in the hands of a few of those who had successfully defied any attempts to bring about Home Rule to Ireland, who had organised a military machine to defend their cause, and who, in consequence, had spent a lifetime in exercising political power without any but the scantest reference to the general body of the movement. So by a combination of the particular circumstances of the leaders, and default on the part of

the Council, it was the caucus which controlled the Unionist Party: the democratic process was at best a facade and at worst a fraud.⁹¹

As for the National Party, an authoritative account of Afrikaner Nationalism describes, "...elite politics within Afrikanerdom as a corporate group, with a mere veneer of rank and file accountability..."⁹² and the National Party itself as:

..a well-disciplined party in which the decisions are made by a small elite, while at the same time allowing members the freedom to express opinions and dissent within the party structure.⁹³

Gwendolen Carter, describing National Party organisation in the 1950s (when popular enthusiasm and participation in the party were at their height) notes that, "The Afrikaner, especially of the platteland, still cherishes his concept of radical, direct democracy..", but makes plain the hold of the party organisation where, "...the provincial congress seems to be less the supreme authority it is often termed, than a useful sounding board for party leaders, and a necessary outlet for party members". (emphasis added)⁹⁴

In general, while the ideology and politics of the National Party made it plain that it was essential for the party when in government to look after the interests of the white worker, this should be done without according white workers a corporate place in its organisational hierarchy. The paternalistic flavour of this position is conveyed well by the 1952 party constitution in which a section is devoted to "Co-operation between Employers and Employees":

In the economic spheres the Party desires to knit together people of all sections and

levels having the right of existence so as to provide security and foster a spirit of mutual trust, solidarity and joint national responsibility.⁹⁵

The section makes it plain that the party and the party alone is fit to carry out the functions of representing workers, functions which elsewhere are generally the province of specifically working-class organisations.

The place of working-class people in the Ulster Unionist Party and the National Party can be gauged by reviewing data on the socio-economic background of elected representatives in each. Newell Stultz's analysis of the data for individual Nationalist MPs first elected between 1940 and 1970 reveals that only 1,3% of them were 'workers',⁹⁶ and that the largest occupational group (nearly 40%) is that of 'opinion formers' (teachers, academics, journalists, clergymen, 'organisers' and politicians). It is possible to make a similar calculation from the biographical detail on Unionist politicians supplied by Harbinson.⁹⁷ The near total exclusion of blue collar workers which Stultz refers to among elected representatives in South Africa is mirrored in the Ulster data. Only seven out of 164 unionist MPs elected to the Stormont Parliament between 1921 and 1970 could be described as workers, or 4,3%.⁹⁸ There were nearly as many housewives, twice as many landowners, twice as many doctors of medicine,⁹⁹ five times as many lawyers (barristers and solicitors), and seven times as many company directors in the total. Of the 57 unionist members returned to the Westminster Parliament during this period, not one could be classified as a worker. This brings the percentage for the two elected assemblies to 3.1%.¹⁰⁰

Although the Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist class coalitions both incorporated working-class elements in

subordinate ways, there were differences during the respective periods of growth and consolidation. For a period at least, Ulster Unionism made provision for the formal corporate representation of working-class interests at the political level. This was done through the medium of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA).

The undemocratic nature of the Ulster Unionist Party, described above by Harbinson was a feature from the beginning. Despite its carefully cultivated mass electoral base, the party was effectively run by a small, elite group. The movement's supreme body, the Ulster Unionist Council was set up in March 1905. It had two hundred members, made up of one hundred from local unionist associations, and fifty each from the Orange Lodges and the party's peers and MPs. But as Buckland observes:

..the real control of the organisation lay in the hands of a few landowners and professional and businessmen, the day-to-day work being carried out by the permanent staff and a small, elective, standing committee.¹⁰¹

This was, "...virtually the directing power of Ulster Unionism". Buckland argues that the elite nature of Ulster Unionism jeopardised its unity, especially in the light of its 'leading citizens' complacency and refusal to address the social problems of expanding and industrialising Belfast,¹⁰² and the vitality shown by populist and labour movements like the Belfast Protestant Association, the Independent Orange Order, and the Belfast Trades Council. It is true that after the dock strike in 1907, the 'progressive' challenge withered away but this, according to Buckland was due to the inadequacies of individual progressive leaders and the superior financial and organisational resources of Unionism (especially after the formation of the UUC in 1905):

.. rather than to Ulster Unionism's ability to adopt a social programme which would mobilise working class support. The problem of labour was, therefore, an ever-recurring problem to Ulster Unionism's leaders.¹⁰³

After the dock strike, there was a long period of industrial peace, but between 1918 and 1921, problems of adjustment from a wartime to a peacetime economy caused conflict in the shipyards, which spread to other industries. Apart from normal grievances over hours and pay, the issue of Catholic workers taken on by shipbuilders to replace Protestants who had joined the armed forces became acute when the volunteers were demobilised. Other factors helped stoke Protestant working class militancy; the increasing violence of the IRA's guerrilla struggle; the vocal support given by the British labour movement to the nationalist cause in Ireland; and the extension of the franchise. In this political climate, the unrepresentative nature of Ulster Unionism again became a matter of concern to at least some of its leaders.

The outcome of this concern was the UULA,¹⁰⁴ set up in June/July 1918 in order to combat the divisive effects of socialism on working-class Unionists¹⁰⁵ and to give them a voice in the councils of Unionism.¹⁰⁶ One of the prime movers of the UULA was Edward Carson, the leader of the Unionist Party,¹⁰⁷ and there was about the organisation a strong element of incorporation from above. Although on social issues and working class interests, the UULA leadership was very deferential,¹⁰⁸ some Belfast employers were suspicious and fearful of allowing such direct working-class representation, and for these reasons, the UULA could not be regarded as the solution to the unity question. Despite this, UULA members displayed a capacity for

independent initiative and action reminiscent of the 1903-1907 period, although this reflected plebeian sectarianism, rather than progressive labour politics. Examples of this tendency include the role of the UULA in the expulsion of Catholics from the shipyards in 1920 and in the formation of unofficial paramilitary groups of ex-servicemen and old UVF members for the purposes of self-defence, reprisal and coercion of Catholics during the intensifying conflict between Irish republicans and the British state.¹⁰⁹

The UULA admirably captures the enduring complexities of Unionist class politics. The leadership of the party was divided on it. Carson had ambitions to secure the long term mass basis of the Unionist Party with a social programme and a permanent voice in the party's directing body for its working-class constituents, but the hostility of the businessmen in the party to this showed itself in conflict over allocation of seats to working men.¹¹⁰ The UULA members who achieved elected office were criticised for their deference and lack of militance in strikes and related issues. But in the pogroms and organisation of private armies, they were too militant for the party leadership, and it is likely that one of the functions of formal incorporation which the UULA represented was for the leadership to control plebeian sectarian militance.

The UULA enjoyed only a brief period at the centre of Unionist politics. Buckland attributes its eclipse to the post-war slump in the linen and shipbuilding industries, arguing that, as always, economic depression effectively curbed the attraction of labour politics for the Protestant working class and diminished the need for the leadership to conciliate it. Farrell notes that although the UULA had been sidelined in organisational terms by the mid-1920s, the grassroots tendency which it represented was still able to

prevent even the 'minimal' concessions to the Catholic minority which 'pragmatic' Unionist leaders wanted to make in order to propitiate the British government.¹¹¹

The Combination of Means Used to Ensure Cohesion in Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism

The problems of unity in Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism were defined in a context where industrial and political issues were closely intertwined with each other and with questions of national identity. They were addressed by a mixture of coercion, privilege and ideology.¹¹²

In each case, similar sets of complex relationships were involved. Afrikaner and Protestant workers were in antagonistic relationships with blacks and Catholics over industrial issues which affected their material interests -- like dilution and the access of these competitors to skilled jobs -- and also over questions of national identity, political rights and the nature of the state. They were also in antagonistic relations with 'their own' bourgeoisie over normal issues of class conflict -- wages and conditions -- but also over questions of the status and treatment of 'native' labour. Industrial issues did not stand alone but always had to be seen in the context of other issues of domination and subordination. These ranged from racial attitudes in the wider society, and racial antagonisms at the workplace, to formal disabilities and discriminations. On the other hand the political imperative of unity within the dominant bloc could be undercut by class conflict.

Coercion played an important prefatory role to the creation of the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance. The suppression of the Rand Revolt in 1922 made clear the unacceptability of autonomous direct action by the white working class and

paved the way for the highly structured system of industrial relations created by the Pact government, and exploited later by the National Party, both before and after it gained power, in order to incorporate white and especially Afrikaner workers.

Coercion played a much smaller part in the Unionists' situation. The interests of skilled shipbuilding and engineering workers (always central to Protestant working class concerns) were much less vulnerable to threats from cheap labour, and employers in these industries did not face the peculiar conditions of the mine owners in South Africa, conditions whose logic forced them into head-on conflict with white workers. The imperatives which forced the Union government to crush the Revolt were also much weaker in the Irish case. Both in fiscal and coercive terms British rule in Ireland was much less fragile than the South African state, so that although the military did intervene in the 1907 dock strike, the stakes were much lower than in the desperate gamble and draconian response which the Revolt represented for the white miners, the employers, and the state. Paradoxically, although the British state in Ireland was stronger than its South African counterpart, Ulster Unionists faced a much graver political threat to their self-determination from Irish nationalism and liberal governments in the successive Home Rule crises between 1886 and 1921. As a result, Protestant workers and employers could not afford a conflict so destabilising as to require coercion on the scale of the Revolt.

A central resource in explaining the success of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism as all-class political movements in industrial societies, has been the argument that the political allegiances of Protestant and Afrikaner

workers respectively were bought with privilege and material advantage:

Although white workers were never the dominant partners in the alliance, the attention given to securing their immediate interests in high wages compared with black workers and in job security (a combination necessarily requiring job reservation) served as the lynchpin of the class alliance which provided the political base for Afrikaner unity.¹¹³

..Unionist leaders...had mobilised the Protestant masses to resist Home Rule and inclusion in the Free State through the policy of discrimination and the ideology of Protestant supremacy..If a lasting loyalty to the new state was to develop among the Protestant masses, they had to be given a privileged position within it.¹¹⁴

As those benefiting from sectarianism perpetuate it in Northern Ireland, so is racism perpetuated in South Africa. And as in the one case the beneficiaries include workers as well as elites, so is it in the other. Northern Irish Protestants exclude Catholics from jobs that would compete with Protestant workers; South African whites reserve certain jobs exclusively for themselves.¹¹⁵

Despite the similarities summarised above, the privileges which helped create and maintain the two class coalitions by protecting and promoting the material interests of Protestant and Afrikaner workers differed in both extent and the form in which they were secured. The difference in extent was evident in both the political and economic privileges each group enjoyed. Afrikaner workers, like all whites, enjoyed democratic rights within racially defined boundaries which excluded 'non-whites' from common enjoyment of them. In Ireland, before partition, Protestant workers

existed on common terms of individual political equality with Catholics. After 1922, such political privilege they (and other Protestants) enjoyed was as a result of tactics like gerrymandering or ratepayers' franchise in municipal elections and not from formal inequalities in individual status.

The difference in extent of political privilege is matched by differences in material inequalities between Protestant and Catholic on the one hand, and Afrikaner and African on the other. The core of working-class Protestant material privilege, lay in domination of skilled working-class jobs, and a significantly smaller chance of being unemployed. This still left many Protestants in unskilled positions and vulnerable to unemployment, in an economy which ever since the 1920s has experienced very much higher rates of unemployment than the rest of the United Kingdom. The point has often been made that although Protestants have been relatively better-off than Catholics, the absolute number of Protestants living in poverty has always been greater than those of Catholics. This situation signals inequalities of a very much lesser scale than those between Afrikaner workers and Africans, especially as the Nationalist coalition matured in the exercise of governing power after 1948.

There has also been a difference in the way material privilege was secured. The privileges of Protestant workers were much less formally underwritten and elaborated than those of white workers in South Africa. Although under the Stormont regime between 1922 and 1972, there was no shortage of Unionist leaders to echo the call of Prime Minister Brookborough on Protestants to employ only their own kind, and the government itself practised discrimination in the public service, a large measure of employment discrimination

was left in the hands of the Protestant workers themselves, perpetuating the exclusivism of the old craft unions.

In this sense, Protestant workers themselves ensured the perpetuation of privilege by control of the workplace which was maintained by basing Orange Lodges there, by overt displays of Orange and loyalist symbols and ritual, and in the last resort by physical expulsion. In the latter half of the 19th century, employers sometimes protested at this denial of the right to employ whom they pleased, but by the time of the formation of the Northern Ireland state, their acquiescence was secure. The point is not to shift responsibility for discriminatory practices and inequality away from either employers or the state; both were culpable in their own ways. The point is that as in so many other things, Protestant workers had a direct and autonomous hand in creating and maintaining their own political and economic conditions. For instance, exclusionary control at the workplace was mirrored in the practice of street-fighting by which both Protestants and Catholics undertook the defence of their own residential areas. This was much less true of Afrikaner workers, whose privileges were secured by the highly elaborate programme of discriminatory legislation begun in the White Labour Policy by the Pact government. The colour bar was not simply the result of action by powerful trade unions, but of government action. According to Mason this was especially true of the colour bar in the manufacturing industry where "...at its inception, a large number of its beneficiaries were neither employed, nor union members":

..this group of white workers came to see their guaranteed positions, from the first, as the outcome of governmental measures, rather than as simply a response to their own solidaristic efforts. The need for trade union solidarity was never, therefore, as

firmly rooted here as among the mineworkers. Attempts to predict future trade union solidarity on the basis of the early 'good signs' amongst the mineworkers were inherently misdirected.¹¹⁶

Class Formation and the Forging of Political Unity

The formation of the Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist class coalitions involved a similar mixture of pre-industrial relationships shaped by colonialism, settlement and resistance, and class formation under conditions of industrialisation.

Despite the similarity of elements, there were clear differences in the processes. The making of the Protestant working class took longer, with domestic production of linen from the 18th century and machine production of textiles from the early 19th. This process also preceded the direct incorporation of working-class elements into the Unionist coalition. By contrast, the growth of South African manufacturing industry, the state-sponsored creation of an Afrikaner working class, and the final elaboration of the Afrikaner Nationalist class coalition were virtually contemporaneous.

The two working classes were made from much the same materials, small farmers and landless labourers. But the move from the land represented a trauma for Afrikaners not duplicated in the case of Ulster Protestants. Military defeat and the effects of rinderpest and drought made the experience of the move to the city a harrowing one in both personal and, more importantly, national terms, with attendant grievances and resentments. The making of the Protestant working class does not evoke such individual or collective trauma. Belfast's riggers, riveters, fitters, shipwrights and joiners were made from:

..fresh-faced countrymen who walked down to the Lagan to find work ..They came down from the Hollywood Hills, from the shores of Belfast Lough, from Castlereagh -- from the green townlands around Craigantlet, Comber, Moneyrea -- small farmers, hedge carpenters, landless labourers, bringing little with them except the clothes on their backs, their strength and intelligence and leaving behind little more than the prospect of building 'famine walls' for the landlord.¹¹⁷

This doubtless romantic view should not be allowed to obscure the rigours and insecurities faced by the newly-urbanised. But it helps to establish a background to a context in which Protestant workers, or at least the elite of shipyard and engineering men who set the tone for the rest, could maintain their independence and identity not only from Catholics, but also from 'their own' bourgeoisie.

South African cities, where commerce and industry were dominated by Jews and the English, must have presented a more hostile and alien challenge to Afrikaners than Belfast presented to the newly-urbanised Protestants. Their reception was eased by the familiar sectarian institutions of Orangeism. The emerging industrial bourgeoisie of Belfast was composed of their co-religionists. As we have seen, these factors favoured a limited, but durable and sometimes intense expression of autonomous action in both political and industrial conflict.

Internal and External Factors in the Creation of Class Coalitions

In the historiographies of both Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism rival accounts assign differing weights to internal and external factors in creating unity.

In the case of Unionism, external factors include the political advance of Irish Nationalism and betrayal by the British government. Fear of these, it can be argued, were powerful stimulants to Unionist unity. In opposition to this, the orthodox Irish nationalist account stresses another external factor, 'imperialism'. In this version, no substantial material or other interest existed within the Protestant community to persuade them to deny their Irish identity, but their resistance was induced by the manipulations of the British ruling class, whose imperial interests were served by partition. In South Africa, the British annexations of the 1860s and 1870s, the Jameson Raid, the Boer War, and the entry into the First and Second World Wars can be cited as political events which helped to shape a nationalist identity among Afrikaners.

In both cases, neo-Marxist challenges have emerged to accounts which allegedly over-emphasise factors like these, and which seek to put the burden of historical explanation on factors internal to the Ulster Protestant and Afrikaner Nationalist communities, notably the dynamics of class relations within them. As the remarkably similar historiographical critiques and manifestoes of Gibbon's and O'Meara's works indicate,¹¹⁸ the intention is to rescue Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism from accounts which falsely view them as spontaneous reactions to external threat, and the realisation of collective identities which required only conditions of crisis to make themselves manifest. Instead of falling into the trap of understanding the movements in their own terms and categories, these materialist accounts claim to demystify them and reveal the class-based interests which shaped them.

Gibbon successfully relates the growth of Ulster Unionism to the emergence of a powerful industrial bourgeoisie in

Belfast prior to the first Home Rule Crisis, and even O'Meara's critics credit him with powerful insights in his account of the Economic Movement, and the class interests which used it as a vehicle. In each case, reappraisal of the building of class coalitions emphasises the importance of material factors and the dynamics of class relations. Whatever the final judgment on the adequacy of these materialist accounts in explaining the individual cases, they point to important comparative issues.

Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism are most like each other when viewed as movements which reflect ethnic solidarity in the face of external threat. Viewed (even in part) as the product of contending and combining class forces, as the product of internal tensions and aspirations as well as external threat, they seem less alike. The neo-Marxist historians of Ulster Unionism have an even more pressing difference than that (shared by their South African counterparts) with liberal historians. It is with previous Marxist accounts of Ulster Unionism, and especially their treatment of working-class Protestants as dupes or pawns of the bourgeoisie. It is this failure of analysis, stemming from the work of James Connolly, the inspiration of the Left in Ireland, which in its uncritical acceptance of Irish nationalist perspectives, prevents Irish Marxists from taking Unionism seriously.¹¹⁹

As a result, the work of Bew, Gibbon, and Patterson in this field represents a self-conscious vindication of the enduring vitality and robust (though limited) autonomy and class character of popular Protestant politics and ideology. In their reappraisals of the growth of the Afrikaner Nationalist class coalition, Davies, O'Meara, and others come to what is effectively the opposite conclusion about the Afrikaner working class. Indeed the overall thrust

appears to be to deny the status 'working class' to Afrikaner wage earners (and to whites generally), or at least to emphasise that their stay in the true or 'productive' working class was a short one. The story that emerges from the revisionists' analysis is of defeated and unformed class elements which were incorporated into the Nationalist class alliance first by the systematic construction of privilege for white workers created by the Pact government in a stratified structure of industrial relations, and then by the Broederbond's assault on the trade unions.

These Afrikaner wage-earners had no real equivalent of the autonomous traditions of the Protestant working class; their sense of themselves as the most staunch of loyalists, consciously separate as a class from other elements in Unionism; their own view of themselves as an elite, 'the industrial classes' distinct from a backward nationalist peasantry; their own options of ultra-sectarianism and labourism; their own practices of direct and exclusionary action from ritual marching to riot and pogrom, which did not always fit with the interests and policies of the leading elements in the Unionist coalition.

The other side of this coin was that the organising and controlling classes in each coalition were different too. When it became clear with the rise of Sinn Fein and the intensification of the struggle for Irish independence over most of the island, that Unionism would henceforth be an Ulster phenomenon, the movement was led by a mature capitalist class, long established in shipbuilding, engineering and textiles, and with close links to British imperial capital. The Afrikaner Nationalist class coalition was led by the aspirant capitalist class of Transvaal petty bourgeoisie whose role O'Meara emphasises, and the Cape-

based leadership of agricultural capital which was branching out into insurance and banking.¹²⁰ With the benefit of hindsight, it might be noted that the Northern Ireland economy (as it became after 1921) was poised for decline, while that of South Africa after 1948 was poised for development. Afrikaner Nationalism then represented aspiring classes in a dynamic economy, while Ulster Unionism represented dominant classes in a declining economy.

In this context, Afrikaner Nationalism represented a transformatory movement of aspiring classes, while Ulster Unionism was an essentially defensive project. As Harbinson puts it, the essential character of Ulster Unionism was that "...the Union apart, they placed no distinctive principles or programme before the people".¹²¹ By contrast, Afrikaner Nationalism was a movement of elaborated ideology, economic development and large-scale social engineering. For each of them, the capture of state power presaged a quite different project from its counterpart.

SUMMARY

Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism were both class coalitions, formed when external events seemed to threaten the interests of groups who were disposed to view themselves in ethnic terms, but were differentiated by class. These class differences were not transcended in the coalitions, they were reproduced, and the patterns of incorporation in both cases was a hierarchical one.

Despite this similarity, there were important differences in the materials from which these coalitions were constructed, and the processes by which it was done. The substance of these differences was that Protestant workers in Northern Ireland had a more fully elaborated working-class identity,

in terms of the work they performed, and their traditions of independent political action. Both sets of workers were, broadly speaking 'settler' working classes, given the different places occupied by them in the occupational structure and political system compared to blacks and Catholics. But the supervisory and administrative nature of the work done by many Afrikaner workers, especially in the mining industry, meant that the settler label more truly fits the Afrikaner worker than the Ulster Protestant.

There were other differences in addition to this. As we have seen, the role of the state in organising and guaranteeing the privileges which bound the coalitions together was greater in South Africa than it was in Northern Ireland. The movements which were the vanguards of the coalitions differed too; Afrikaner Nationalism was dynamic and aspirational, while Unionism was static and defensive. After they achieved state power, Ulster Unionism in 1921, and Afrikaner Nationalism in 1948, these similarities and differences continued to play roles in determining the movements' later trajectories of maturity and decay.

1. Parkin, F. Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique London, Tavistock (1979) pp.4-5.

2. On South Africa, see Van den Bergh, P. South Africa: a Society in Conflict Middletown, Wesleyan University Press (1965) pp.267-8; Moodie, T.D. "The Rise of Afrikanerdom as an Immanent Critique of Marx's Theory of Social Class" Paper presented to African Studies Seminar University of the Witwatersrand, October 1975 and Kuper, L. Race, Class and Power London, Duckworth (1974) pp.206-213 and pp.277-287. On Ireland, see Mansergh, N. The Irish Question London 3e (1975) pp.103-131. For a critical review of recent writing on Northern Ireland, see Whyte, J. Interpreting Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990) pp.175-193. On pp.175-193 he reviews the contributions of Marxist interpretations and their critics.

3. On the general impact of recent Marxist writings on South Africa see, Murray, M. "The Triumph of Marxist Approaches in South African Social and Labour History" Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol. 23 (1-2) Jan-April 1988, pp.79-101. For works which deal specifically with the 'problem' of the white working class see, Johnstone, F.A. Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class and Race Relations in South Africa London, Routledge (1976); Davies, R. "The White Working Class in South Africa" New Left Review (82) 1973, pp.40-59, Davies, R. Capital, the State and White Labour in South Africa, 1900-1960 New Jersey, Humanities Press (1979); O'Meara, D. Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-48 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1983); Simson, H. "The Myth of the White Working Class in South Africa" African Review Vol. 4 (2) 1974; Wolpe, H. "The 'White Working Class' in South Africa" Economy and Society Vol. 5 (2) 1976, pp.197-237; Wolpe, H. Race, Class, and the Apartheid State London, James Currey (1988). Less firmly classifiable as 'Marxist', although his work, "draws on...the historicism and materialism of marxian political economy" (p. x) is Greenberg, S. Race and State in Capitalist Development: South Africa in Comparative Perspective New Haven, Yale University Press (1980). Falling outside this canon of neo-Marxist work, but addressing the same problems of political economy, is Yudelman, D. The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, Capital and Organised Labour on the South African Goldfields, 1902-1939 Johannesburg, David Philip (1984).

Germane to the 'problem' of the Protestant working class in Northern Ireland, are; Gibbon, P. The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland Manchester, Manchester University Press (1975); Patterson, H. Class Conflict and Sectarianism Belfast, Blackstaff (1980); Bew, P., Gibbon, P. and Patterson, H. The State in Northern Ireland Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979); Morgan, A. Labour and Partition: the Belfast Working Class, 1905-1923 London, Pluto Press (1991). Less theoretically oriented, and less explicitly committed to Marxist analysis,

but dealing with the same subjects, see, Gray, J. City in Revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast Dock Strike of 1907 Belfast, Blackstaff (1985). See also, Patterson, H. "Refining the Debate on Unionism" Political Studies Vol. 24 (2) (1976) pp.205-208; Bew, P. "The Problem of Irish Unionism" Economy and Society Vol. 6 (1) February 1977, pp.89-109; Bew, P. "Britain's Modern Irish Question" Economy and Society Vol. 10 (4) November 1981, pp.480-486. Bew, P., Patterson, H. and Gibbon, P. Some Aspects of nationalism and Socialism in Ireland: 1968-78 in Morgan, A. and Purdie, B. Ireland: Divided Nation, Divided Class London, Ink Links, (1980) pp.152-71.

4. Adam, H. and Giliomee, H. Ethnic Power Mobilised: Can South Africa Change? New Haven, Yale University Press (1979). See O'Meara's critique in Volkskapitalisme pp.7-9, and Giliomee's reply in "Constructing Afrikaner Nationalism" Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol. 18 (1-2) 1983, pp.82-98, at pp.89-98.

5. See especially Wolpe, "The White Working Class..", and Simson, "The Myth of the White Working Class.."

6. See especially Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism

7. See especially Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism

8. See especially Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development pp.5-28.

9. One example of the financial resources of the Belfast bourgeoisie will suffice. At a meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council on 23 September 1913, an indemnity fund of £1m was proposed, to compensate members of Unionism's private army, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) for loss or injury. By the end of the meeting, £250 000 had been pledged, and the balance was made available shortly afterwards. As Stewart puts it, "In this way the business community of Belfast underwrote the UVF and provided for anticipated casualties if the worst came to the worst". Stewart, A.T.Q. The Ulster Crisis London, Faber and Faber (1967) p.77.

10. See chapter 1 note 21.

11. For manifestos of these discontents, see Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour pp.1-7, and O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme pp.1-17.

12. See for example, Kantor, B.S. and Kenny, H.F. "The Poverty of Neo-Marxism: the Case of South Africa" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 3 (1) October 1976, pp.20-40.

13. By contrast with the neo-Marxists' virtually exclusive attention to the twentieth century, Herman Giliomee argues in a number of articles that the process was much longer and partook of many dimensions other than material and class interests. See, "The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915" South African Historical Journal (19) 1987, pp. 115-142; "Western Cape Farmers and the Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 14 (1) October 1987, pp.38-63; "The

Beginnings of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness, 1850-1915" in Vail, L. (ed.) The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa London, James Currey (1989), pp.21-52; "Constructing Afrikaner Nationalism". Giliomee makes it clear that while he regards the processes described by Davies, O'Meara, et al as the 'secondary growth' of Afrikaner Nationalism, he distances himself sharply from the explanations of 'awakenings' and 'origins' favoured by nationalist apologists. See "The Beginnings of Afrikaner Ethnic Consciousness" p. 21.

14. Giliomee, H. "The Communal Nature of the South African Conflict" in Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. Negotiating South Africa's Future Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1987), pp.114-130, at p.117.

15. Marks, S. and Trapido, S., The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa London, Longman (1987) p.25.

16. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development p.288.

17. Davies, "The White Working Class.." p.43.

18. Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour... p.3.

19. Simons, H.J. and Simons, R.E. Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950 London, International Defence Aid Fund (1983).

20. Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour... p.37, Note 23.

21. Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour pp.43-95, Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa chs 2-4. See also Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold.

22. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.39.

23. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.166.

24. Davies, Capital, the State, and White Labour p.133.

25. Davies, Capital, State and White Labour p.155.

26. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.210.

27. Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour p.180.

28. Freund, W.A. 'Introduction', in, Morrell, R. (ed.) The Poor Whites: A Social Force and a Social Problem in South African History Pretoria, University of South Africa Press (1992) pp.xvi-xvii.

29. Adam and Giliomee, The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power p.151.

30. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.82.

31. Davies, Capital, the State and White Labour p.200.

32. Davies, Capital, State and White Labour p.227.

33. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme especially pp.78-95. See also by the same author, "White Trade Unionism, Political Power and Afrikaner Nationalism" in Webster, E. (ed.) Essays in

South African Labour History Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1978); O'Meara, "Analysing Afrikaner Nationalism: The Christian-National Assault on White Trade Unionism in South Africa" African Affairs Vol. 77 (306) 1978 and "The Afrikaner Broederbond 1927-48: Class Vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 3 (2) 1977.

34. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond...." p.157.

35. "...those groups which had been moved or pushed off the land, yet did not have to sell manual labour in order to subsist..", O'Meara, "White Trade Unionism.." pp.172-3.

36. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.177.

37. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.91.

38. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.257.

39. Simons and Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950 p.98.

40. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.18.

41. Adam and Giliomee, The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power p.151.

42. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.89.

43. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.80.

44. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa p.21. See also pp.83-117.

45. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.80.

46. Davies, Capital, State and White Labour p.101.

47. Van Onselen, C. "The Main Reef Road into the Working Class: Proletarianisation, Unemployment and Class Consciousness Amongst Johannesburg's Afrikaner Poor, 1890-1914" Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914: II New Nineveh Johannesburg, Ravan Press, (1982) pp.111-170.

48. Van Onselen, "The Main Reef Road" p.158.

49. Van Onselen, "The Main Reef Road" p.161.

50. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme p.82.

51. On Belfast's industrialisation, see Hepburn, A.C. and Collins, B. "Industrial Society: the Structure of Belfast in 1901" in Roebuck, P. (ed.) Plantation to Partition Belfast, Blackstaff (1981) pp.210-228; see also, Beckett, J.C. and Glasscock, R.C. Belfast: the Origins and Growth of an Industrial City Belfast, BBC Publications (1967).

52. Hepburn and Collins, "Industrial Society" p.210.

53. For a summary of these conditions and conflicts, see Gray, City in Revolt pp.4-14.

54. Buckland, P. "The Unity of Ulster Unionism" History Vol. 60, (1975) pp.211-223, at p.211.

55. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.9.

56. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.14.
57. Ibid.
58. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.85.
59. Hepburn and Collins, "Industrial Society" p.210.
60. Hepburn, A.C. The Conflict of Nationality in Ireland Edward Arnold, London (1980) p.3.
61. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism pp.22-43.
62. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.34.
63. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.22.
64. On the Orange Order in Belfast during these phases, see Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism pp.70-85.
65. Foster, R. Modern Ireland 1600-1972 London, Allen Lane (1988) p.305.
66. On William Johnston and Orange dissent, see Gray, City in Revolt pp.44-52, and Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism pp.1-18.
67. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.7.
68. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism p.101.
69. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.10.
70. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.11.
71. Gray, City in Revolt p.45.
72. Gray, City in Revolt pp.47-8; On Crawford and the Independent Orange Order, see also Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism pp.42-61.
73. On the Magheramorne Manifesto see Gray, City in Revolt pp.48-52.
74. On the development of labour politics in Belfast, see Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism pp.18-41.
75. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.51.
76. Census of Ireland For the Year 1901: Province of Ulster, City of Belfast: Occupations of Males, Table XX, pp.24-25.
77. These were engine and machine worker, millwright, fitter and turner, boiler maker, spinning and weaving machine worker.
78. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism pp.40-41.
79. Gray, City in Revolt pp.27-43; Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism pp.51-61.
80. Gray, City in Revolt p.37.
81. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.53.
82. See Wright, F. "The Ulster Spectrum" in Carlton, D. and Schaerf, C. Contemporary Terror: Studies in Sub-State Violence London, Macmillan (1981) pp.153-214, at pp.153-65. See also Wright, F. Northern Ireland: a Comparative Analysis Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1988) pp.55-58.

83. Lee, J. Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1989), pp.1-18. See also by the same author, The Modernisation of Ireland 1848-1918 Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1973). For a dissenting view on racism as part of Unionist ideology, see Paul Bew's review of Modern Ireland "An iconoclastic history, yet partly it's dated" Fortnight April 1990, pp.23-4.
84. Gray, City in Revolt p.23.
85. Gray, City in Revolt p.169
86. Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism p.66.
87. Gray, City in Revolt p.209.
88. On the importance of 'democracy' for whites in reproducing the South African state, see Kaplan, D.E. "The South African State: the Origins of a Racially Exclusive Democracy" The Insurgent Sociologist Vol. 10 (2) 1980 pp. 85-96.
89. See Harbinson, J.F. The Ulster Unionist Party 1882-1973 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1973).
90. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party pp.36-37.
91. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party p.52.
92. Giliomee and Adam, Ethnic Power Mobilized: Can South Africa Change? p.68.
93. Giliomee and Adam, Ethnic Power Mobilized p.197.
94. Carter, G.M. The Politics of Inequality 3e London, Thames and Hudson (1962) p.226.
95. The Constitution of the National Party for Cape Province, 1952 in Carter, The Politics of Inequality pp.467-475, at p.470.
96. Stultz, N.M. Who Goes to Parliament Occasional Paper No. 19, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown (1975) pp.45-47.
97. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party Appendices B and C, pp.181-203.
98. One docker, two shipwrights, one printer and three "engineers". The last category is an elastic one, but the educational backgrounds of the three individuals suggest blue collar status.
99. The number of medical doctors is exaggerated by the fact that the Queen's University of Belfast possessed a Stormont seat throughout this period and many of the incumbents were in fact professors of medicine.
100. The figures for the elected and ex officio members of the second chamber, the senate are much higher. Out of the 96 senators listed by Harbinson (The Ulster Unionist Party Appendix D, pp.204-209), 11 might reasonably be described as working class. But although the senate had delaying powers akin to those of the House of Lords, in practice it was purely decorative. The higher representation of working class Unionists in the upper house strongly suggests

harmless tokenism.

101. Buckland, P. Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland Vol. II, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1973) p.21.

102. Buckland, Ulster Unionism Vol. II p.28.

103. Buckland, Ulster Unionism Vol. II p.31.

104. On the UULA, see Buckland, Ulster Unionism Vol. II, and "The Unity of Ulster Unionism"; Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism; Farrell M. Arming the Protestants Dingle, Brandon (1983); Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland pp.48-9

105. At the same time, the Ulster Workers' Union (UWU) was set up, "...to keep Protestant unskilled workers from joining the Irish Transport Union or the British general unions, which might infect them with ideas of union militancy, and support for Irish nationalism". Farrell, Arming the Protestants p.27.

106. There were many piecemeal increases in the membership of the Ulster Unionist Council after 1905. By 1925 there were 508 members, of whom twelve were sent by the UULA, the same number as the Ulster Womens' Unionist Council. The bulk of the delegates were from the divisional (constituency) associations. This puts the question of corporate labour representation in perspective. See Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party

107. Carson was also president of the British Empire Union, a right-wing Conservative organisation dedicated to countering the spread of bolshevism in Britain. See Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland p.47.

108. See Farrell, Arming the Protestants p.241.

109. On the paramilitary functions of the UULA see Farrell, Arming the Protestants pp.27-28.

110. Farrell, Arming the Protestants pp.181-2.

111. Farrell, Arming the Protestants pp.181-2.

112. The question of ideology will be discussed in one of the following chapters, and will not be addressed in depth here.

113. Stadler, A. The Political Economy of Modern South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987) p.84.

114. Farrell, M. Northern Ireland: the Orange State London, Pluto Press (1976) p.81.

115. MacDonald, M. Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland Cambridge, Polity Press (1986) pp.137-8.

116. MacDonald, Children of Wrath

117. Steelchest. Nail in the Boot and the Barking Dog Belfast, Flying Fox Films (1988). The small scale (geographical and hence probably emotional too) of the journey taken by the newly-urbanised is suggested by the fact that several of the place-names invoked are now suburbs

of Belfast.

118. Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism pp.1-21;
O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme pp.1-17.

119. See in particular the critique of the Connolly tradition in Irish Marxism in Bew, et al, (1) The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72 pp.1-43 and pp.212-221 and (2) "Some Aspects of Nationalism and Socialism in Ireland: 1968-78". For a counter-attack on Bew, Patterson and Gibbon from a standpoint which tries to combine Marxism with a belief in "the primacy of the national question" see Munck, R. "The New Marxist Revisionism in Ireland" Capital and Class (46) Spring 1992, pp.95-110.

120. The leading role of Cape elements is stressed by Giliomee.

121. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party p.166.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY OF ULSTER UNIONISM AND AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism both successfully integrated social classes which are normally considered to be antagonistic to each other into successful coalitions of social and political mobilisation. Essential to the process of integration in both cases was the exploitation of political mythology which became essential to the cohesion of the coalitions, and was woven into their patterns of growth, maturity and decay. Just as the classes were integrated into Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism in different ways and with different results, so too was political mythology exploited in different ways and it is to the demonstration and interpretation of these differences that this chapter now turns. What is important here is not only the content of the mythologies, but the ways in which they have been elaborated, transmitted and possessed.

Political mythology is a well-nigh universal feature of political societies, forming an apparently indispensable part of such political processes as mobilisation, the construction of ideology and the manufacture of legitimacy.

In his analysis of political myth,¹ Henry Tudor stresses the practical understanding offered by political myths, rather than disinterested knowledge, or explanation from general laws and principles;

The understanding ...(a mythical explanation).. provides is a practical understanding: that is to say, an understanding in which men consider the world that confronts them, not as the object of disinterested curiosity, but as the material for their activity.... men view their circumstances in the light of their purposes, and their explanations are simultaneously justifications and prescriptions.²

Typically, political myths use the past to make sense of the present; events and personalities are chosen, highlighted and cast in a dramatic narrative. A representative individual, a cadre, or even a whole people may be the protagonist. Among the functions myths fulfil are to define identity or to create or reinforce solidarity. Myths provide exemplars, look outward to other groups, classes or nations to distinguish friends and enemies, and inwards to distinguish heroes and traitors. Myths simplify choices and offer guidance on how they should be faced; they explain setbacks and celebrate victories;

The view of the world that we find in a myth is always a practical view. Its aim is either to advocate a certain course of action or to justify acceptance of an existing state of affairs.³

Political mythology is a very useful concept to employ in trying to understand political movements, but it is not without its problematic aspects. For instance, is it necessary or even possible to distinguish mythical from other forms of knowledge and understanding? This problem is

apparent when the subject of truth claims arises -- assessing a myth either on its own, or in competition with a rival mythical account. Tudor stresses that it is important that myths have a basis in truth -- the events described cannot be fictional, they must be 'real' and the account must not be falsified outright, so that the myth is plausible. Tudor places the historian, the philosopher and the scientist in opposition to the myth-maker. Theirs is the world of, "...general laws and principles... disinterested curiosity". In particular, historians do not have the myth-makers' imperatives of justifying actions, giving to people the confidence to act. By contrast, "...they generally stand at some distance from events and conditions on which they comment. This allows them to see things in a broad perspective".⁴ Probably enough has been written about the problems of ideology and objectivity in the social sciences to make this an inadequate basis for distinction between the historian and the myth-maker. Reference could be made to the historian's technical expertise, commitment to evaluation, the range of techniques he or she can use to validate sources and so on. Others, like du Toit, argue that professionalism provides no sure dividing line between history and myth;

The hold of intellectual paradigms is strong; even competent and critically minded historians may find their researches giving credence to historical myths. Such a myth is that of the 'Calvinist' origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and associated racial ideologies..... The problem is that much of the relevant historical research has been carried out in terms of intellectual paradigms very much conducive to the myth.⁵

Du Toit does not offer an explicit, theoretical demarcation between myth and history, although it is implicit in his argument that such a divide exists;

..we may simply wonder at the fact that not only van Jaarsveld but other historians as well -- the competent and professional as well as the lesser brethren, Afrikaner nationalist as well as liberal historians -- went to such lengths to manipulate or selectively distort the evidence in order to create and sustain a historical fabrication, and that reputable social scientists all too readily accepted this concoction as the historical truth.⁶

L. M. Thompson takes up this issue, criticising Tudor's division between history and mythology.⁷ His final position seems to be that historians are myth-makers, but specialist, technically proficient ones;

One cannot understand the present without some awareness of the momentum it carries over from the past. Historians as specialists in knowledge of the past, have an obligation to communicate their knowledge to other people as effectively as possible. If that means making myths -- that is to say describing exemplary events powerfully -- then historians should indeed be mythmakers.⁸

Akenson takes sharp issue with both Thompson⁹ and du Toit¹⁰. His criticism of the former revolves around the claim that Thompson views political myths as things to be vindicated or (more likely) to be disproved. As Akenson sees it, instead of standing outside and judging a mythology (or belief system) "the most important task of the scholar is to see how the systems work, and this has to be done in terms of the myths themselves".¹¹ In the criteria he sets out for assessing myths¹² Thompson perhaps offers some grounds for Akenson's charges, but in fact, despite an undertone of disapproval, he appears far more concerned to discuss how political mythology has been adapted in Afrikaner Nationalism than he is to discredit it.¹³

In Akenson's judgement, du Toit's account of Afrikaner Nationalist political mythology has two principal deficiencies. The first is his (openly expressed) intention to discredit the mythology on the grounds that it has had, and continues to have, deleterious political effects. Certainly the question of scholarly bias is a sensitive one, but in this case du Toit's frankly expressed normative purposes should be considered along with the determination which pervades Akenson's own work to rehabilitate his chosen peoples from the effects of unfair scholarly treatment and the mistaken policies of metropolitan governments.

In the second place, Akenson accuses du Toit of academic snobbery and sleight of hand in adopting an "exclusive" definition of ideology in order to deny that "...there is some common ideological core that persisted through all the successive transformations of the Afrikaner movement".¹⁴ For Akenson this amounts to denying the existence of a rich demotic Afrikaner culture so that du Toit can "...force the analysis of Afrikaner out of the historical mode".¹⁵ This is a strange charge to make, considering what du Toit has to say about the historical development of Afrikaner Nationalism elsewhere in the source which Akenson uses against him.

From the first stirrings of a wider group consciousness among the scattered rural population of the Cape Colony and the republics in the 1880s through the cultural and language movements of the early twentieth century to the collective ethos of the modernising Afrikaner elite that is now in power (...Afrikaner nationalism..) has had a much more variegated career than it is usually credited with. Nor should this be surprising. The last 100 years have seen dynamic transformation of South Africa from an agrarian society to a modern industrial state; based on a minority group in a complex

plural society the Afrikaner movement had to find its course amid changing patterns of new political and economic alignments. In the circumstances it is only to be expected that the Afrikaner's political history should not be a steady and unswerving progress toward some predefined goal, but rather constitutes a complex pattern of apparent demise, resurgent assertion, consolidation, fusion and faction."¹⁶

Any reading of this source other than a determinedly adversarial one is likely to conclude that de Toit's intention is to view Afrikaner Nationalism historically and to understand it in context rather than in terms of some ahistorical schema. It is not clear why Akenson reacts with such vehemence to du Toit on the question of Afrikaner go
112demotic culture. The charge cannot (or should not) be that du Toit denies the existence of this. Although he is much less impressed by it than Akenson -- referring to "...a diffuse set of sentiments associated with common language, history and identity"¹⁷ -- he certainly does not deny the possibility that a "...rich popular culture..."¹⁸ existed. Presumably the issue is over whether this popular culture can usefully be called an 'ideology'. Unfortunately, Akenson himself is less than explicit on the nature and role of ideology. In fact he scarcely uses the concept at all.¹⁹ His own arguments are developed through usages like "Afrikaner culture", "Afrikaner thought", "Afrikaner mythology", "Afrikaner belief system", "Afrikaner cosmology", without any great attention to how they are elaborated and mediated into specifically political thought and practice. The reader is left with no guidance as to whether he rejects du Toit's usage of 'ideology' per se, or whether he accepts the nature of ideology as du Toit's work reflects it, but claims that such an ideology did in fact inform 'Afrikaner Culture' at an earlier period than du Toit gives credit. Since he offers no clue as to whether 'ideology' has a special role to play

in 'Afrikaner culture', or what such a role might be, his charges against du Toit's usage lack focus and cogency.

Whatever the substance of Akenson's charges, his criticism of du Toit raises interesting questions about the relationships between mythology and ideology and between popular and 'high' (in the sense of cultivated, formalised and elaborated) components of both. It might be argued for instance that mythology and ideology overlap, given their characteristic functions of explaining, interpreting and justifying the social world for individuals and classes, ethnic groups and nations. Perhaps a fruitful approach might be to regard political myths as pre-ideological, a necessary precondition for the elaboration and structuring of programmes which offer specific guidance and inspirational models explicitly for political action. If this were so, it could be argued that all ideologies are based on political myths, but not all political myths have a superstructure of ideology.

Societies which reflect popular participation and mass mobilisation in politics are particularly hospitable to political mythology. Like other political phenomena which are characteristic of modernised societies, mythologies may be seen firstly as part of a general class of things, secondly as part of more specialised categories and thirdly in terms of their own national context. In this way, the myths of the Proletarian Revolution in Russia, and the Long March in China may be compared in terms of all political myths, of revolutionary mythologies, and in terms of specifically Soviet and Chinese historical and ideological context. We ought to be able to compare political mythologies in the way we compare ideologies, movements and institutions, in order to construct or discourage general

propositions or law-like statements, and to cast light on the nature of individual cases by reflection from others.

Such is the pervasiveness of political mythology in advanced societies that there are many surface similarities between individual examples, in form (often narrative drama) in content (crisis and deliverance) and in type (foundation myths and diaspora myths are particularly well-dispersed). If we are selecting mythologies for comparison then, we should try to ensure that there are more than surface similarities.

In Protestant Ulster and among Afrikaners, political mythology has been unusually pervasive and intense. It has been widely disseminated and deeply felt, assiduously cultivated and regularly celebrated. It has also been in both cases, unusually resistant to the secularisation (both literal and metaphoric) of politics, which has taken place in comparable advanced industrial societies. Indeed the popular Western view of both, is of thoroughly atavistic and anachronistic communities.²⁰

Most political mythologies are inclusive in the sense that they try to mobilise support on the basis of whole societies. In this context themes such as the melting pot, resistance to the invader or imperialist, revolutionary citizenship, and so on are prominent. By contrast, the political mythologies of Protestant Ulster and Afrikanerdom are sectarian and exclusivist, although they differ both internally and between each other in degrees of determinism over questions of identity. Following from this, each is basically a mythology of group relations, one which is unusually frank about the centrality of conflict and the impossibility of assimilation or even accommodation. The fault lines in Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism,

the cracks along which the movements began to decay, were given definition by reformers' abandonment of the prohibitions on accommodation about which the respective mythologies were quite explicit.

The sources of these mythologies are also apparently similar. Themes and events from settler and frontier history are picked out and highlighted, emphasising encirclement and siege, crisis and deliverance. Archetypal self-assigned attributes, especially honesty, are contrasted with the treachery of 'natives' and with conspiratorial metropolitan forces. Concerns derived from Protestant, specifically Calvinist theology are superimposed on these concerns. In this way, political issues are typically cast in religious contexts; relationships and identities are given transcendental sanction and hence a special authenticity and force. The idea of covenant is common, indeed central to both, and illustrates the force of the sacred in politics. Political and religious ritual overlap to an unusual degree; days set aside to celebrate or re-dedicate some aspect of political mythology are treated in effect as holy days, and the form of celebration may well be a religious one.

These similarities seem to go well beyond those shared to some degree or another by all political mythologies, and warrant further comparative treatment of the mythological dimension of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism in growth, maturity and decay. The following salient aspects will be considered; the sources of the mythologies; their structure, content and purposes; the context of their appearance and development; the media through which they have been constructed, transmitted and reproduced;

AFRIKANER POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY

Whatever the differences between liberal and materialist accounts of Afrikaner Nationalism most historians acknowledge the importance of mythology in creating and fostering the sense of identity (whether natural or invented) which helped mobilise Afrikaners and define ideologies which guided and led the mobilised group.

Giliomee for instance, citing Nairn,²¹ invokes;

..the element of shared historical memories.. the collective unconscious of an ethnic group -- the indigenous resources on which cultural entrepreneurs such as Malan drew, appealing to Afrikaner history and myths about themselves in presenting the 'purified' National Party as the only credible ethno-cultural representative.²²

Du Toit²³ invokes the "collective ethos" of Afrikaner communities, and states in this context that;

Even political myths and collective fictions may become potent forces for change when they are adopted as the unifying symbols and programmes for action by important social groups.²⁴

Moodie goes even further than these authors and writes;

.. if the idea of theoretical consciousness is at all valid for social groups, Afrikanerdom achieved theoretical consciousness between August 1938 and October 1939. This Afrikaner consciousness was based not on class (not even on race) but on culture, upon language and tradition.²⁵

He views such a consciousness as a source of inspiration in the minds of masses, a rallying point for action, a resource of symbols to be tapped in times of doubt and despondency.

Although he has radically different views on the nature and the genesis of this consciousness, O'Meara too testifies to powerful nature of the mythology, especially when writing of the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek, where he says,

..the Eufees did largely succeed in mobilising Afrikaans-speakers in terms of a culturally and ethnically exclusive vision. It united Afrikaners as Afrikaners...²⁶

The sources and content of the mythology which helped create the collective "unconscious" or "ethos", the "theoretical consciousness" or the "..culturally and ethnically exclusive vision.." are most comprehensively treated by Moodie²⁷ and Thompson.²⁸ From both it is clear that the principal source of mythology is a selective reading of South African history which begins by conceptualising history in ethnic terms -- it gives 'Afrikanerdom' a history. This history portrays a pattern of relationships between settler, native, and imperial power, in which Afrikaners identify themselves in struggle with African peoples (Blood River and the Covenant) and the British (Slagtersnek, the two Anglo-Boer Wars). In the political mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism, the Great Trek defines Afrikaners against both, and fittingly it is the centre-piece of the mythology.

In some respects, the contents of Afrikaner Nationalism's political mythology has many familiar elements. The Great Trek for instance has elements of epic journey, migration and civilising mission, all of them discernible in other epics of political mythology (the Long March, the American West, European imperialism). Deliverance in a climactic battle like Blood River is also a commonplace theme, not least in the centrality of the Battle of the Boyne in Ulster Protestant mythology. The tendency to project significance backwards onto events and individuals who would have been

unaware of any ethnic portent in their actions (as in the Slagtersnek myth) is also widespread.

A notable feature of the mythology analysed by Moodie is the emphasis given to themes of martyrdom, suffering and death, arranged around two cycles, the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War;

The saga which began with the gallows at Slagtersnek ended with an execution in Pretoria; the flight from the British in the Cape and Natal was duplicated by defeat at the hands of the same enemy in 1902; the suffering and death of women and children at Blaaukrantz foreshadowed the agony of the concentration camps; and the martyrdom of Piet Retief was reflected in Paul Kruger's death in exile and the execution of Jopie Fourie.²⁹

This emphasis on suffering, redemption, and resurrection, is not unusual in nationalist mythology.³⁰ But unlike other nationalisms, in this instance the realisation of the sufferings into the hoped-for future was complicated by the fact that this required the subordination of others. This has meant that Afrikaner Nationalist mythology has had to bear the burden of being both the story of a suffering, martyred people and an ascendancy, or imperial myth in which themes of scientific racism, civilising mission, and the preparation of others for self-determination have successively appeared.³¹

In considering the source and content of Afrikaner Nationalist mythology, the aspect which has attracted the most scholarly attention has been the fusion of religious and political concerns in the production of what Moodie called the Afrikaner Civil Religion. Within this, the most prominent aspect has been that of the covenant, and this has been subjected to the closest critical scrutiny.³²

Certainly in terms of popular understanding of Afrikaner Nationalism, the covenant is a very influential concept, integrating and explaining the alleged sacred intensity, historical longevity and thus the rigid intransigence of an embattled people, apparently marked by God for special suffering, special favour and a divine mission.³³

The vow allegedly taken by the trekkers before the battle of Blood River, to build a memorial church if God granted them victory, has certainly been a central point of Afrikaner Nationalist mythology in the twentieth century, especially at the centenary of the vow in 1938;

While the Broederbond elite had long preached the civil theology and celebrated the rituals of the civil faith, the Ossewatrek (the 'oxwagon trek') made the Afrikaner civil religion an integral part of the consciousness of thousands of ordinary Afrikaners.³⁴

Thompson prefaces his sceptical and critical treatment of the myth with the following summary;

We shall find that we cannot be sure precisely what actually happened concerning the taking of the covenant or vow in the commando in 1838; that once they had defeated the Zulu and sacked their headquarters, nearly all the members of the commando proceeded to forget all about any such vow or covenant; that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century a number of clergy, politicians, and intellectuals in the Transvaal and Orange Free State republics began to resurrect, embellish, codify, and celebrate a version of the events of December 1838 for the purpose of promoting pride and self-confidence among Afrikaners in the face of British imperial aggression; and that their successors have modified the story during the twentieth century as British imperialism has waned and African nationalism

has replaced it as the principal threat to Afrikaner Nationalism.³⁵

As part of a wider demystifying assault on the alleged Calvinist origins of racial supremacy and chosen people myths in Afrikaner Nationalism, du Toit also refers to the covenant theme;

A prime example of this relevant to our theme is the meaning of the covenant made by the Trekker-commando under Andries Pretorius prior to the battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838. Blood River and the covenant have become so charged with political, historical and religious significance as central symbols of modern Afrikaner Nationalism that it is virtually impossible to conceive what meaning the covenant might have had at the time in the minds of the participants themselves.³⁶

Du Toit argues that the covenant fell into no well-established religious tradition, although he suggests that there may have been secular precedents among blood oaths taken by frontiersmen. Furthermore, he claims that until the nationalist period, when it would gain "dominant significance", the Trekker covenant was, "an isolated and almost forgotten episode".

The critical comments of du Toit and Thompson reveal an important aspect of the mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism, namely the extent to which it was the self-conscious creation of a modernising elite. This in turn points the way for a discussion of the media in and through which the mythology was articulated and disseminated.

Many writers have noticed the dual nature of Afrikaner Nationalism, the fostering of a sacred history in an urban, industrial context;

..the preservation, salvation, or rescue of the volk required both the affirmation of traditionally rooted symbols of unity and the 'modernisation' of the community. Thus, paradoxically, the unity of the community could only be maintained through its differentiation to meet the requirements of the modern economy which it sought, ultimately, to control.³⁷

Du Toit makes the same kind of point;

Contemporary Afrikaner Nationalism is quite simply a different kind of social and cultural phenomenon than the 'natural' and spontaneous sense of solidarity and the cohesive integration of a number of central values that might have characterised the traditional Afrikaner community...The very process of mobilising Afrikaner cultural identity presupposes the breakdown of the traditional order and responds precisely to the needs and pressures of the urban context by propagating such an intensely conscious identification with 'Afrikaner' values and symbols.³⁸

Perhaps the most singular aspect of Afrikaner Nationalism and its political mythology lies in the organisational network which was employed to create and foster this "intensely conscious identification". Giliomee discusses how after 1934, when the National Party in its present form came into existence;

.. the party, the Afrikaner Broederbond, the Afrikaans press, writers, businessmen, schools, universities, and even the church all attempted to foster the consciousness among the Afrikaners of an exclusive political identity.³⁹

In this way, the Afrikaner population was mobilised along every important social dimension with the political party at the apex, but resting on a base of cultural, religious, industrial, and educational organisations. As Slabbert

points out, the bureaucratisation of Afrikaner life was the key element in which a collective ethos could emerge;

On all fronts of Afrikaner life bureaucracies developed. On the economic front there were SANLAM, SANTAM, the Reddingsdaadbond, Federale Volksbelegging, Blanke Werkers Beskermingbond, Ko-ordinerde Raad van Suid Afrikaanse Vakbonde, Yskor, Foskor, and Evkom...The cultural bureaucracies were the Akademie vir Taal, Lettere en Kuns, the Broederbond, the FAK, the Ossewa Brandwag, and SABRA.⁴⁰

Although these bureaucracies were created to serve specific purposes that were diverse, and even contradictory;

..in them, elite groups could articulate the needs of their members as they conceived of them and interpret the events that the majority of Afrikaners were experiencing.⁴¹

There is broad agreement among historians and sociologists that Afrikaner political mythology was manufactured, fostered and disseminated very much by elites. Emphases vary greatly on the extent to which these elites had a pre-existing degree of common identity on which to work. There are differences as to which of the elites were most important at what time,⁴² and the relative contribution of the strands they represented - neo-Fichtean, neo-Calvinist, National Socialist and so on. There is disagreement over the nature of elites, particularly the role of class factors.⁴³ What appears not to be in dispute is that the sense of unity, and collective ethos on which Afrikaner Nationalism was built, was constructed by interlocking elites and organisations. Central to this view is the crucial role of an elite of petty bourgeois 'cultural entrepreneurs' which saw itself as economically deprived and politically excluded.

The elitist nature of the forces which created Afrikaner Nationalism is usefully illustrated by the Broederbond.⁴⁴ This organisation is not an open one and the process of selection and recruitment is rigorous.⁴⁵ Giliomee emphasises the fact that 'sound financial standing' has always been required of recruits, while O'Meara states that the Bond, "...only ever represented bourgeois and petty bourgeois groups".⁴⁶ The Broederbond has performed many functions within Afrikaner Nationalism. These have varied in their salience over time, but a central one has always been to define and redefine Afrikanerdom and Afrikaner Nationalism. In Thompson's estimation, the Broederbond has been '...largely responsible...' for the success of the Afrikaner nationalist mythology, so that;

Not only has it dominated the historical consciousness of most Afrikaners, but it has also been imposed on the minds of other sections of the South African population, especially since the National Party won control of the state machinery in 1948.⁴⁷

We might summarise at this point by saying that the political mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism has been drawn from a selective account of a history reflecting the three-cornered relationship between settler, native and imperial power, fused with concerns drawn from Protestant and more specifically, Calvinist theology. This fusion has produced a distinct and exclusive⁴⁸ sense of ethnic identity. Whatever the pre-existing 'natural' or organic sense of collective identity, this political mythology has displayed a very marked degree of self-consciously directed effort in manufacture and dissemination. This has involved a very high degree of bureaucratisation and the creation of a network of organisations which has been considered the pre-requisite

for the successful creation and fostering of a collective ethos. All of this has been the work of elites whose self-assigned tasks have been of rescue and transformation.

The fact that these tasks have been dynamic, not merely defensive and preservative, has meant that political mythology has not been enough to sustain Afrikaner Nationalism. Political mythology offers only limited guidance for action, while it might well provide the "ethnic adhesive" (in Giliomee's striking phrase) which makes concerted action possible. It is here that, despite Akenson's criticisms, du Toit's distinction between ideology and mythology strikes a chord. He argues that if there has been an underlying continuity in the collective ethos that has persisted in many forms since the 1880s, "it can be found only in a diffuse set of sentiments associated with common language, history and identity", adding;

That there is some common ideological core that persisted through all the successive transformations of the Afrikaner movement and that provided the basis for these developments, or a standard against which they can be measured is a fiction with little or no historical basis.⁴⁹

Following Carl Friedrich he points out that nationalism has no necessary content regarding the political and social order, except to realise nationhood. In the case of Afrikaner Nationalism, apartheid provided the ideology whose specific programmes would achieve the transformation and the tasks of rescue and modernisation. Viewed in this light, political mythology was a necessary pre-condition for the elaboration and articulation of more specific ideological programmes, but can be seen as separate from them. This raises the possibility that as ideology is redefined in order to cope with changing political conditions, political

mythology has to change too. Thompson devotes a chapter of his work to this phenomenon, arguing that some components of mythology can be changed more easily than others.

It is true that the Slagtersnek myth, formerly a particularly potent contributor to Afrikaner political consciousness, is being eased out of the lexicon, and that the myth of the covenant is a source of lively debate among Afrikaners. However, official South Africa remained wedded to a modified version of the cluster of myths concerning the vacant land, the unassimilable races, and the ten black nations.⁵⁰

ULSTER PROTESTANT POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY

The political mythology of Protestant Ulster is a rich and profuse one, so that only the central elements will be treated here.⁵¹ Ulster Protestants are the heirs if not invariably the descendants of English and Scottish settlements in the north-eastern counties of Ireland in the seventeenth century. As such, the organising themes of their mythology are those of a civilised and embattled settlement, fortified against a dispossessed and rebellious native people who are numerically superior, unassimilably alien and implacably hostile. As with other political mythologies, these themes are used to give continuity and point to what becomes Ulster Protestants' 'own' history. In this history, Ulster Protestants define themselves not only in the pattern of relationships between settler and native, but also between both and the imperial power. Ulster Protestants see themselves as the agents and dependents of this power, but also sometimes the victims. The salient events thus picked out, are the massacres of 1641, the siege of Derry and the Battle of the Boyne in 1689, and Ulster's resistance to Home Rule for Ireland between the 1880s and 1922.

In some senses it is an oversimplification merely to conjure up an image of siege, and the enemy outside the walls. The plantations of Ulster were imperfectly carried out and separation of settler and native was far from complete or clear cut. As Stewart points out;

The planters were frontiersmen, and naturally displayed frontier attitudes where their lands bordered on those of native septs. But even more important to them was the problem of the enemy in their midst. From the outset they faced the menace of a fifth column.... It is not the problem of antagonistic groups confronting each other in different parts of the province; it arises from the mosaic of the settlement itself. The settlers developed over a long time a special kind of siege mentality created by the necessity of having always to test the loyalty of those within the settlement itself, both the 'Irish' settled in pockets within the frontier and those whose steadfastness might have been undermined by constant day-to-day contact with them...⁵²

In this way, betrayal, treachery and conspiracy figure largely in the settlers' mythology, notably in the 1641 uprising, when it was the enemy within who rose and massacred large numbers of Protestants.⁵³ This rising of the native Irish against the settlers has to be seen in the larger context of the tangled affairs of king and parliament in England, Scotland and Ireland at that time. The actual death toll in the massacres has long been the subject of tendentious controversy, and the whole event has recently been the subject of fresh research and historical revision.⁵⁴ But it is widely accepted that the rising was a profoundly traumatic one for Ulster Protestants, a myth of infamy which lasts to this day.

Important as the folk memory of 1641 is, it is quite eclipsed by the twin legacies of the Williamite wars in

Ireland, the siege of Derry and the Battle of the Boyne. The siege especially can be regarded as the central event in the Protestant mythology;

The siege of Derry in 1689 is their original and most powerful myth. They seem to see themselves in that and since then, as an embattled and enduring people. Their historical self-vision is of endless repetition of repelled assaults, without hope of absolute finality or fundamental change in their relationship to their surrounding and surrounded neighbours.⁵⁵

The essential elements are as follows. In 1688 a Catholic army was poised outside the walled city of Derry (Londonderry) to secure the city for King James in his coming struggle against Prince William of Orange, causing consternation among the Protestants behind the walls. While the city's leaders disputed the validity of the army's warrants;

An excited debate was taking place among crowds gathered in the market square. Many of the younger citizens were for keeping the regiment out, and even some of the aldermen, though fearful of the consequences, hoped that this might be done without their having to take the lead. The waiting soldiers on the opposite bank, suspecting some such design, now began to cross the river in considerable numbers and move swiftly towards the city walls. Suddenly when the first of them were within sixty yards of the Ferry Gate, a group of thirteen apprentices ran to the main guard, seized the keys, and drawing up the bridge, shut and locked the gate. They then hastened to shut the other three great gates of the city leaving an armed guard on each.⁵⁶

It should be noted, as Stewart points out, that the closing of the gates was an act of rebellion, given that James was the legitimate king in Ireland, and that the people of Derry took this action not out of profound identification with

William, but out of fear of a repeat of 1641, fuelled by a forged letter which signalled just such a happening.⁵⁷ In this all-important myth, the young and hot-headed took direct action to secure a threatening situation, while wiser heads temporised. One of the latter, Governor Lundy, has been immortalised as the arch-betrayer. Genuinely unsure of the rights of the situation and afraid to commit the people in his care to a hazardous siege, Lundy was forced to flee the city in disguise. He is burned in effigy annually to this day, as a symbol of all who would compromise the security of the people. This 'Lundy myth' was used with devastating effect, notably by the Reverend Ian Paisley, to discredit Ulster Unionist leaders who between 1968 and 1974 tried to deal with the legitimisation crisis in the Northern Ireland state by means of reforms under British auspices, leading to institutions designed to share power with the Catholic minority.

By the time the siege was lifted in July 1690, the Protestant cause was saved by the victory of Williamite forces at the Battle of the Boyne. The Boyne and the siege are commemorated yearly on the Twelfth of July and the Twelfth of August respectively.

In modern times, it is Ulster's resistance to Home Rule which has provided the most fertile source of political mythology.⁵⁸ In this, the centrepiece of resistance was the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant⁵⁹ which was opened for signature along a third of a mile of tables in the Belfast city hall and in smaller towns throughout Ulster on 23 September 1912. The document attracted the signatures of 218 206 men, and a separate declaration to the same effect was signed by 228 991 women.⁶⁰ It was clear that this was not merely rhetoric, because Protestants had been drilling secretly since the previous year. In 1913 the Ulster

Volunteer Force (UVF) was formed out of these contingents, armed with illegally imported weapons, and trained by British Army officers. One hundred thousand men were mobilised eventually, by and large reproducing the class structure of Protestant Ulster in the ranks of the UVF. The UVF was welcomed by the Protestant leaders because it ensured that the resistance to Home Rule would be contained and disciplined. The Covenant and the quasi-military nature of the UVF gave a very strong impression of discipline and even lawfulness to what were in fact highly unconstitutional and illegal acts.

The myth of Ulster Protestants as a people always prepared to defend their rights, under their own leaders and against lawful authority if necessary, but in a disciplined and lawful, but utterly determined way has been a very powerful legacy in the present Northern Ireland crisis. The Covenant was a momentous expression of solidarity, dignified, precise and limited, embodying to perfection the Ulsterman's self-image as an honest, loyal citizen, provoked beyond endurance by conspiracy and subversion. The myth of the Covenant lies long across the present Northern Ireland crisis, but it had its roots long precedent to the crisis over the Third Home Rule Bill.

There are two principal sources for the Ulster Covenant. The first is the Scottish covenanting tradition in which relations between king and people, notably over the question of the upholding of the reformed faith, were pursued in a contractarian tradition.⁶¹ By 1912, later advocates of contract and resistance had been superimposed on this tradition, elaborating the myth of covenanting resistance in Unionist rhetoric. For instance, one speaker at a meeting before the signing of the Covenant invoked to a cheering crowd of thousands the spirit of Charles James Fox, to

refute Liberals who claimed the Unionists were being treasonous;

These are the words he used speaking of the principle of resistance -- 'I mean the general principle of resistance, the right inherent in free men to resist arbitrary power whatever shape it may assume, whether it be exerted by an individual, by a Senate, or by a King and parliament united. This I proclaim as my opinion; in support of this principle I will live and die.'⁶²

In general, the contractarian spirit of the Covenant could hardly have been made plainer. This explicit form of social contract was preceded by the older tradition of 'public banding', also Scottish, in which, "through the centuries of weak central government in the kingdom, the nobility and gentry had developed a tradition of entering into 'bands' for mutual protection".⁶³ The Williamite settlement meant that there was no longer any need for covenanting in Scotland and the growth of public order meant that public banding too became unnecessary;

In Ireland however, there was a continuing threat to public order, however exaggerated that threat might have been in Protestant minds - unlike Scotland, the country really was full of Catholics. In effect, public banding was not abandoned, but from 1688 was transmuted into an exercise embracing not only Presbyterians but those English (and indeed Scottish) settlers who were attached to the episcopal establishment as well. Whether under the name of the Antrim Associations in 1689, the militia in 1715, 1719, 1745, 1756, and 1760, or the Volunteers in 1778, the Protestant tenantry were accustomed to being arrayed in arms under their landlord's leadership to maintain order whenever the French/Spanish/Catholic/Jacobite threat with the presumed native threat accompanying it reared its ugly head. The habit sustained in the Protestant community the sense that public order really derived more from their exertions than from the activities of the sovereign authority.⁶⁴

The covenanting and banding traditions have political, military and religious aspects. In political terms there is a strongly contractarian dimension to the notion of covenant which encourages resistance to leaders who betray their trust and/or fail to provide strong enough leadership. In military terms, self-help and direct action in times of emergency rather than vesting a monopoly of violence in the state are stressed. In religious terms, the Ulster Covenant is decorated with providential language and there is no reason to doubt that the signatories attached a sacred significance to it, bestowed by the fact that they attested to it before God. But the Covenant myth is essentially one of a compact between ruler and ruled, and between the members of the community themselves,⁶⁵ and it is not, certainly not directly and explicitly, one between the community and God, bestowing the status of chosen people.

There is however one exception to this. MacIver has demonstrated how the Rev. Ian Paisley uses the writings of John Knox to fashion such an understanding of a covenant between God and the Protestants of Ulster;

The Old Testament covenant between God and Israel established for Knox and other reformers the ultimate precedent for God's desired relationship with contemporary nations. The truly reformed nation became the contemporary counterpart of Old Testament Israel -- a chosen people with a special God-given task. Just as Knox and the early Scottish Covenanters believed God had ordained Scotland to play a special role in history, so Paisley and his associates perceive Ulster as unique in God's sovereign plan for history ...⁶⁶

Several points should be noted in this context however. Firstly, in the sources cited by MacIver to justify this

point (Paisley's writings), she finds that a national covenant with God is "implied, if not directly stated". Secondly, it can be pointed out that although Paisley is the single most popular political leader of Ulster Protestants, the small size of his church in relation to the mainstream Protestant denominations suggests that his theology does not necessarily reflect the dominant mythical conception of covenant. Thirdly, in any case as MacIver points out, Paisley is also concerned to elaborate a theory of covenant between ruler and ruled. Again relying on Knox, and using explicitly Biblical citation (in an interpretation of Romans 13) he defines a theory of resistance to rulers who do not fulfil their obligations to their people, specifically to afford them protection;

The duty to resist that Knox and Paisley glean from Romans 13, while founded ultimately upon the covenants of ruler and people with God, expresses itself concretely in the notion of a mutual contract between ruler and people elaborated by Knox. In Knox's view, the subject's duty to obey depends wholly upon the ruler's fulfilling her responsibility: protecting well-doers and punishing wrongdoers. Resistance would surely follow a ruler's failure to perform these duties, and such resistance would be justified.⁶⁷

Like all political mythologies, that of Protestant Ulster requires media for reproduction and dissemination. In some respects such formal media are strikingly lacking in this case. There has for instance been no intellectual class engaged in the elaboration and articulation of this mythology, in ways typical of full-blown nationalist movements. No substantial literature supports the mythology, although there is a scattering of histories, and some works of near-hagiography.⁶⁸ Any literary figures who might be described as Ulster Protestants by origin, tend to be

sceptical, ambivalent, or downright critical of the mythology.⁶⁹ The British connection which is an integral part of the Ulster Protestant's mythology is enshrined and reproduced in the trappings of statehood and rule, but these and media like broadcasting and the press tend to reproduce a metropolitan British culture rather than a parochial Ulster one. Protestant aspects of the mythology are proclaimed from the pulpit, and the churches are centres of activities carried on by social, educational and welfare organisations.⁷⁰

The most important organisations involved in reproducing and propagating Ulster Protestant mythology however, especially in its exclusivist, sectarian and activist forms, are the fraternal organisations. The myth of the siege of Derry is embodied in the Apprentice Boys of Derry,⁷¹ which has seven parent clubs within the walls, many branches throughout Ulster, and some in England, Scotland and America. The order has no important function other than to commemorate the siege, mainly through the ritual of marching along the city walls themselves, a practice which in 1969 was the occasion of the scenes of public violence which above all symbolised the beginning of the current round of 'troubles'.

Overshadowing the Apprentice Boys in size, though not in symbolic importance, is the Orange Order, whose marches, especially commemorating the Battle of the Boyne on 12 July, represent the most notable regular display of Ulster Protestant solidarity, and adherence to its political mythology.⁷²

The origins of the Orange Order (which was founded in 1795) are complex⁷³ and even a little obscure, although in the Orangemens' own mythology, the starting point is taken to be a sectarian affray called the 'Battle of the Diamond' near

the village of Loughall in County Armagh. The Order grew out of rural and agrarian vendettas in County Armagh in the eighteenth century. These did not at first have an exclusively sectarian character, and some of the early vengeance groups which participated in them had mixed membership. The deeper significance of the Order's origins can be interpreted in terms of economic and demographic changes which threatened status balances between Protestant and Catholic in rural County Armagh where the two denominations were approximately equal in numbers. The burden of explanation has shifted from that of land hunger to changes in the rapidly developing linen industry which threatened the position of Protestant journeymen weavers. Whatever the case, the rural struggles took on a sectarian character;

The conflict in County Armagh passed on two traditions to the wider Orange movement of the nineteenth century and after. The rural labourers and the new urban working class created by Belfast's linen mills and shipyards inherited the Peep o'Day Boys' militant anti-Catholicism, and their rituals of confrontation. The Armagh gentry of the Established Church were succeeded over the years by the Ulster landed classes, the clergy and the politicians, for whom the Order provided a loyal vassalage, an electorate and ultimately a citizen army.⁷⁴

The Orange Order contributes to the reproduction of the Protestant political mythology in very direct ways. Its rituals, particularly marching, commemorate the principal events and personalities of that mythology. The lodges into which the Order is administratively divided (there are 1 450 in Northern Ireland) are often named for these events and personalities, and they carry elaborately printed banners depicting scenes central to the mythology. In addition, marching is a display of territoriality and dominance, a

rite of assertiveness and refusal, "to treat politics as having to do with compromise and consensus rather than elemental confrontation".⁷⁵

The Order claims to perform welfare and educative functions as well and the roles it plays are aptly summarised in a source quoted by Whyte;⁷⁶

...a bridge between denominations; an arena for friendly competition between lodges; an opportunity for celebration and display; a means of instilling discipline into the irresponsible; a forum where the low status Protestant can make his views heard.

Although the Order makes rather a point of its fraternal nature, and middle-class Protestants who have wished to make a political career have generally had to adhere to the forms of Orangeism, it is predominantly a lower-class organization. Many professional and intellectual Protestants associate it with bigotry and violence. Despite this, it is likely that the Orange Order still fulfils for many lower-class Protestants, in the performance of its rituals and the sustaining of its mythology, the functions of an earlier era as described by Miller ;

Orangeism sustained within this modernising society, however, the core of a community which cut across social classes, in which all were in some sense equal in their common Protestantism. Social change might place one's class in jeopardy -- one might cease to be an independent weaver or a strong farmer and become instead a factory operative or a shipyard worker -- but one could never lose the status which attached to being a Protestant, except by some unthinkable act like marrying a Catholic.⁷⁷

The Order's membership was estimated at 90 000 by Rose in 1971,⁷⁸ a figure which suggested that 32% of male

Protestants belonged. The Order itself claimed 95-96 000 members in 1984,⁷⁹ although actual membership data, like initiation rituals, and the substance of what happens at meetings, are secret.

An important characteristic of the Ulster Protestant political mythology is that it has not formed the basis for a full-blown ideology. The energies it mobilised were in defence of an established order on behalf of classes which saw themselves as representative of a developed and modernised society threatened by absorption into a polity which under Home Rule would be dominated by backward, agrarian interests and unduly influenced by an allegedly authoritarian and obscurantist church.⁸⁰ If this could be avoided by mobilising the political energies and allegiances of all these classes, then it would not be necessary to recast and reshape society. Brown argues that the Protestants' version of history is simpler than that of the Irish nationalists, and has to perform fewer functions;

By its nature it is bound to comprehend imaginatively much less of the human condition. Northern Protestants as inheritors of those who have prosecuted the political cause of the Protestants of Ireland have in the last analysis only one historical requirement -- to uphold the settlement of 1689 and to try to ensure that the principle of Protestant hegemony is recognised and supported.⁸¹

This simplicity of function has meant that there has been no need for the Ulster Protestant mythology to be elaborated into an ideology more specific and detailed about goals and programmes than itself.

COMPARING THE TWO MYTHOLOGIES

In the light of the foregoing description and analysis, it might reasonably be argued that historically, the two mythologies are indeed strikingly similar. Settler origins and frontier themes, the alien and treacherous majority, siege and the threat of annihilation, deliverance in battle, are prominent in both. In both, the sacred and the secular, and the past and the present are made to overlay and interpenetrate each other in the creation of what indeed might be called, 'civil religions', or 'sacred histories'. Old Testament themes and Protestant theology, notably Calvinism, provide a providential language, exemplars, and an intellectual framework for both. Both mythologies are exclusivist and deterministic in the identities they celebrate, they conceive of politics in terms of group relations, and in this context they are firmly against assimilation. To a very strong degree the mythologies of Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners are the mythologies of minorities who wish to be majorities.

Despite all this, a comparative perspective on the two reveals a number of strong differences. The most salient of these can be discussed in three related themes.

It is likely that all political mythologies are a combination of popular and elite elements. The very purpose of a political mythology is to mobilise popular feelings. A mythology has to be grasped and accepted at a popular level, but rarely if ever can it be used as a mobilising device, purely from popular resources; it is articulated, elaborated, refined, disseminated, to some extent by elites. This of course is rather a broad generalisation, and within its limits, mythologies might differ widely in their elite and popular elements. Such is the case with Ulster

Protestants and Afrikaners. At this point it is worth recalling Akenson's invocation of 'demotic' mythology and culture. It may be assumed (since he does not elaborate) that this is a common sense usage describing ideas which were widely disseminated among the people. Another dimension of 'demotic' is suggested however when Akenson notes that Afrikaner ethnicity was fostered both by "informal, home-based affirmations"⁸² and by more formally organised institutions. A mythology, then, or any other system of ideas, may be more or less demotic in the ways that it is reproduced as well as in the degree of its dispersal.

A third possibility is to stretch the idea of popular to 'populist'. In this sense, a mythology might be more or less demotic in the values it professes and the events it celebrates. It may in one sense or another place 'the people' and 'the establishment' in juxtaposition and celebrate the virtues of the former rather than the latter. The Lundy myth and the institution of Orangeism have clearly had these effects for Ulster Protestants. Orangeism and the establishment have never been completely at ease in each others' company. Orangeism's potential for lower-class indiscipline and the rank-and-file's suspicion that Unionist leaders are not authentically Orange define the uneasiness which the Order's self-conscious attempts at fraternity do not dispel.

The foregoing analysis suggests that Ulster Protestant mythology is highly demotic in all three of these dimensions. It is of course widely shared and understood. It is also reproduced, disseminated and held predominantly at a popular level. In a full and literal way, the mythology is 'possessed' at popular level, and in a straightforwardly literal way, it is a 'street' mythology. It is commemorated and reproduced in marches and other street rituals, and the

streets themselves are decorated with arches and flags, gable ends are painted, the very kerbstones are coloured in party colours. Marching has a direct and practical, as well as a mythological significance, in that it demonstrates territorial 'rights', and demarcates zones of dominance. The border which divides Ireland does not only run between the Republic, and Northern Ireland, but some form of it is never far from the suburbs, villages and city districts where people live.

Where there is a very high degree of informal residential separation, unsecured by legislation and social engineering, the ritual celebration of mythology in the street is an important contributor to group solidarity, and since it is often the occasion of violent confrontation, the medium of renewal and elaboration of the mythology itself.⁸³ For many Ulster Protestants, their demotic mythology has direct, unbroken and unmediated links to mass action. It has reminded them, their leaders and their enemies that it is on themselves and not on the state alone that questions of identity, survival and dominance rest. Participation in living history have constantly reinforced the mythology without cultivation from above.

Thirdly the dominant tenor of Ulster Protestant mythology is an oppositional and populist one. Miller provides the key in this context;

.. the public band naturally conceives itself bound to the sovereign authority not by national identification but by a contractual bond.⁸⁴

Lacking the strong sense of nationality which provides conclusive legitimacy to sovereign authority, all the Ulster Protestant mythology's loyalties are conditional, first and

foremost, to British authority, but to local leaders as well. Northern Ireland may have been 'their' state, but it was an imperfect representation of their identity. Its autonomy was incomplete, its status ambiguous. Its elites might be unreliable, class tensions marked the coalition on which the existence of the state rested. A certain kind of vigilance and distrust of established authority which their long-established mythology, their fraternal institutions and cultural practices were well-suited to express remained characteristic of the Ulster Unionist coalition even after it was entrenched in its own state. Crucially for later developments, all three of these things - mythology, institutions and practices -- were largely immune from manipulation from above.

In many respects Afrikaner Nationalist mythology contrasts sharply with this. Its elaborate organisational infrastructure, and the energetic intellectual input of theologians, scholars and literary men simply have no real parallel in the Ulster case. From an early stage, Afrikaner political mythology was subject to cultivation and manipulation from above. Its genuinely demotic aspects were taken over by the network of cultural organisations which was vital for the embodiment of Afrikaner unity, and latterly by the state. Christian National education was crucial for inculcating obedience to authority as an essential part of Afrikaner ethnicity and loyalty to the state,⁸⁵ rather than the populist independence of the volk was reinforced by state control of broadcasting, and party control of newspapers.

If all political mythologies have both popular and elite origins, then the balance would appear to be strikingly different in these two cases, with the Ulsterman's much more demotic than the Afrikaner's. The difference is highlighted

in the two secret societies which have played such a part in the affirmation and dissemination of the two mythologies; on the one hand, the Orange Order, with its predominantly lower-class mass membership, its fraternal and populist outlook, and its very simple range of tasks and vision; on the other hand, the Broederbond, self-consciously elitist and dynamic in its self-assigned role to assist in the cultural and economic transformation of Afrikaners and the country they would come to dominate.

It is true of course that resistance is an important theme in the mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism; resistance to British imperialism, and the encroachment of native populations figure largely. But it is pre-eminently a mythology of national identification and unity, of an organic volk realised and celebrated in sovereign statehood. As such it is quite without the explicitly conditional and contractarian assumptions of Protestant Ulster.

Another point of difference lies again in a question of balance between elements. In discussing the genesis of Afrikaner Nationalism, Giliomee makes use of Rudé's discussion of ideologies of popular protest, arguing that they are composed of two parts;

..'inherent' beliefs, transmitted through oral traditions and folk memories, concerning matters such as the right to the land and a 'proper' political order, and ..'derived' or borrowed ideas which are of a more abstract political, philosophical and religious nature and are grafted onto the base of the 'inherent' notions. 86

Giliomee goes on to argue that from the 1890s onwards, the inherent beliefs were greatly augmented by derived thought, and it is generally accepted that Afrikaner Nationalism was

progressively developed on a base of mythology to become an ideology of transformation.⁸⁷ This culminated in apartheid, a specific blueprint of social engineering, which itself has proved highly subject to ideological adaptation in the face of changing political conditions.

None of this can be said of the Ulster Protestant mythology which has remained at a 'pre-ideological' level, a popular mythology of resistance, rather than a structured and adaptable ideology of transformation. Its entire substance can still be conveyed by the slogans, "No Surrender!" and "Not an Inch!".

These differences are highlighted in the use the two mythologies have made of the idea of covenant. The Ulster Covenant had its origins in beliefs and practices of the most practical sort, concerned with establishing the limits of political obligation, and organising mutual defence. Although the organisational details were drawn up by the elite of industrialists and landowners who led the Ulster Unionist coalition, the Covenant is a remarkable example of a people taking its history into its own hands, making and possessing its own mythology. It did have providential overtones, and it was the work of a people one of whose characteristics was religious observance (though not necessarily piety). But the significance was a compact between the people and their leaders, and a rejection of the authority of the state to which they were nominally loyal. No special relationship was canvassed between God and Ulster Protestants, no special mission or status was affirmed, other than as the testimony of any God-fearing people defending their rights. It was moreover an end in itself. It was a measured, limited, highly specific response to a crisis, not a metaphysical base on which ideological zealots

and cultural entrepreneurs could later elaborate. If Home Rule could be averted, then there was an end to it.⁸⁸

The covenant in Afrikaner Nationalist mythology has been a rather different proposition. The origins of the original Covenant were obscure, and there was a considerable period in which no-one celebrated it, nor indeed paid much attention to it at all. It was resurrected by strenuous elite efforts, placed at the centre of the Nationalist mythology, and given meanings which it may or may not have had for the original trekkers. Although the centenary of the Great Trek in 1938 generated much emotional involvement among Afrikaners,⁸⁹ there was nothing to match the urgency and distillation of purpose which the direct, popular, mass experience of the signing of the Ulster Covenant provided. The Trekker Covenant was not an end in itself, but became part of more elaborate ideologies, which themselves were subject to revision.⁹⁰ In 1988, the year of the 150th anniversary of the Covenant, there was sharp controversy within Afrikaner political and cultural circles as to the origins of the vow, who precisely subscribed to it, what they actually said, and its present meaning.⁹¹ In this way, the Covenant can be made to serve both reformers and resisters, as Thompson's reports of Day of the Vow speeches indicate. The dominant strands of Ulster Protestant mythology however are too unambiguous to stand as anything but justification for resistance. Reformers could not modify them, they had to abandon them.

In summary, it can be argued that the political mythology of Protestant Ulster is much simpler than that of Afrikaner Nationalism, and bears a much less varied historical burden. Its dominant motif is that of resistance, and its covenant is that of a contracted people, not of a chosen volk. The Ulster Protestant mythology has a more genuine mass base. It

is reproduced and possessed not in the intellectual controversies of elites but at the popular level, in day-to-day local struggles and confrontations over territory, with an enemy who is never farther away than the end of the street. It is less ambiguous, less subject to ideological elaboration and revision, and possibly as a result, more intractable. In this way, it can be argued that Ulster Protestant political mythology, in the comparative terms outlined above, provides a better basis for mass popular spontaneous resistance in forms of direct action than the by-now elaborated, confused, and competing ideologies of Afrikaner Nationalism.

It would be overstating the case to suggest that the availability of a mythology to inspire, explain, and justify, is the sole, or even predominant determinant of such action. But it is likely that an authentic mythology -- in the sense of being accessible, truly popular, and unambiguous, is an important element in the organisation of any mass counter-revolutionary resistance.

1. Tudor, H. Political Myth London, Pall Mall Press (1972).
2. Tudor, Political Myth p.123.
3. Tudor, Political Myth p.124.
4. Tudor, Political Myth p.134.
5. Du Toit, A. "Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm: Prof. F. A. van Jaarsveld and the Historical Evidence for the Afrikaner's Ideas on his Calling and Mission" South African Historical Journal Vol. 16 (1984) pp.49-80, at p.49.
6. Du Toit, "Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm" p.77.
7. Thompson, L.M. The Political Mythology of Apartheid New Haven and London, Yale University Press (1985).
8. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid p.24.
9. Akenson, D. God's Peoples: Covenant and the Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster Ithaca, Cornell University Press (1992) pp.54-55.
10. Akenson, God's Peoples pp.56-59.
11. Akenson, God's Peoples p.55.
12. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid pp.12-17.
13. See especially Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid pp.189-238.
14. Du Toit, A. "Ideological Change, Afrikaner Nationalism and Pragmatic Racial Domination in South Africa" in Thompson, L.M. and Butler, J. (eds.) Change in Contemporary South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1975) pp.19-50, at p.28.
15. Akenson, God's Peoples p.58.
16. Du Toit, "Ideological Change, Afrikaner Nationalism..." p.27.
17. Du Toit "Ideological Change..." p.29.
18. Akenson, God's Peoples p.59.
19. For instance he writes a 23-page chapter on the "High Noon of Apartheid, 1948-1969" (God's People pp.203-226) without a single reference to 'ideology', an abstinence so unusual in the literature on apartheid as to suggest a conscious, though unexplained aversion. Akenson is also unhappy with the concept 'Afrikaner Nationalism', dismissing it as "trivializing" the "all-encompassing" Afrikaner cosmology (God's People p.78) and referring to it only once again.
20. For a discussion of the atavistic view of Ulster's conflicts, see Nairn, T. The Break-up of Britain London, New Left Press 2e (1981) pp.222-227, and Bell, G. The Protestants of Ulster London, Pluto Press (1976). On South Africa, see Adam, H. Modernizing Racial Domination Berkeley, University of California Press (1971).

21. Nairn, The Break-up of Britain p.348.
22. Giliomee, H. "Constructing Afrikaner Nationalism" Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol. 18 (1-2) 1983, pp.91.
23. Du Toit, A. "Ideological Change, Afrikaner Nationalism, and Pragmatic Racial Domination in South Africa" in, Thompson, L.M. and Butler, J. Change in Contemporary South Africa pp. 19-50.
24. Du Toit, "Ideological Change ..." p.19.
25. Moodie, T.D. The Rise of Afrikanerdom as an Immanent Critique of Marx's Theory of Social Class University of the Witwatersrand, Centre for African Studies seminar paper October 1975, pp.7-8.
26. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme Johannesburg, Raven Press (1983) p.77.
27. Moodie, T.D. The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion Berkeley, University of California Press (1975).
28. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid
29. Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom p.12.
30. It is, for instance one of the most prominent features of Irish nationalist mythology, co-existing in uneasy harmony with the militant celebration of hundreds of years of armed struggle.
31. See Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid especially chapters three and six.
32. See Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom chapter 9; Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid chapter 5; Hexham, I. The Irony of Apartheid New York, Edwin Mellon Press (1981); Templin, J.A. "God and the Covenant in the South African Wilderness" Journal of Church History Vol. 37 (1968); Hughey, M.W. "Chosen People, Chosen Races: Religion and the Structure of Race Relations in the United States and South Africa" Politics, Culture and Society Vol. 1 (1) Fall 1987 pp.23-45; du Toit, A. (1) "No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology" American Historical Review Vol. 88 (1983) (2) "Puritans in Africa? Afrikaner 'Calvinism' and Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism in Late Nineteenth-Century South Africa" Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 27 (1985) (3) "Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm" pp.49-80; Akenson God's Peoples pp.45-96.
33. These elements of popular historical understanding of Afrikaners are very persistent, even in the face of scholarship (like du Toit's for instance) which undermines them. A good example of such persistence is, Sparks, A. The Mind of Apartheid London, Heinemann (1990). For a critical treatment see the review by Giliomee in SA International Vol. 29 (3), 1990, pp.183-190.
34. Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom p.180.

35. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid p.146.
36. Du Toit, "Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm" p.77, note 75.
37. Mason, D. "Industrialisation, Race, and Class Conflict in South Africa: Towards a Sociological Resolution of a Re-opened Debate" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 3 (2) (April 1980) pp.140-155.
38. Du Toit, A. "Ideological Change ..." p.27.
39. Adam and Giliomee, The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power p.197.
40. Slabbert, F. van Zyl. "Afrikaner Nationalism, White Politics and Political Change in South Africa" in Thompson and Butler (eds.) Change in Contemporary South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1975) p.7.
41. Slabbert, "Afrikaner Nationalism.." p.7.
42. See for instance Giliomee's cautionary remarks on the extent of the influence of the Broederbond in the 1940s and 1950s in his review of Sparks' The Mind of South Africa in South Africa International Vol. 29 (3), 1990.
43. See O'Meara, D. "The Afrikaner Broederbond 1927-1948.." in Journal of Southern African Studies Vol.3 (2) April 1977, pp.156-186. For a critique of and reply to O'Meara, see Giliomee, H. "Constructing Afrikaner Nationalism" in, Adam, H. (ed.) South Africa: the Limits of Reform Politics Leiden (1983).
44. See O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond .."; Adam and Giliomee, The Rise and Crisis pp.247-253; Wilkins, I. and Strydom, H. The Super Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball (1980).
45. Wilkins and Strydom, The Super Afrikaners pp.369-73.
46. O'Meara, "The Afrikaner Broederbond.." p.186.
47. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid p.46.
48. Giliomee refers to Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation between 1910 and 1970 in terms of a shift from a relatively inclusive to a more exclusive ethnic definition, involving a "...much narrower conception of Afrikanerhood" than before. But he goes on to caution that exclusivists in the National Party who sought the complete Afrikanerisation of public life and the "homogenisation" of the white nation, never gained the upper hand over those who saw the need for co-existence with English-speaking whites in the interests of the "larger order of white supremacy on which Afrikaner control depended". See Giliomee, H. "Nation-Building in South Africa: White Perspectives" Paper presented to the Biennial Conference of the Political Science Association of South Africa Port Alfred, (9-11 October 1989) pp.5-10.
49. Du Toit, "Ideological Change..." p.28.
50. Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid p.230. On the mutability of the Slagtersnek myth see also Giliomee, H. "The Burgher Rebellions on the Eastern Frontier, 1795-1815"

in Elphick, R. and Giliomee, H. (eds.) The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1820 Cape Town and London, Longman (1979) pp.338-56, at p.351.

51. The political mythology of Protestant Ulster has received no treatment as comprehensive as that of Moodie, or Thompson for Afrikanerdom, but there are a number of very useful sources: See for instance, Stewart, A.T.Q. The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969 London, Faber & Faber (1977); Wright, F. "Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster" European Journal of Sociology Vol. 14 (1973) pp.213-80; de Paor, L. "The Rebel Mind, Republican and Loyalist" in Kearney, R. (ed.) The Irish Mind Dublin, Wolfhound (1986) pp.157-87; Brown, T. The Whole Protestant Community: The Making of a Historical Myth Derry, Field Day Company (1985); Elliot, M. Watchmen in Zion: The Protestant Idea of Liberty Derry, Field Day Company (1986); Miller, D. Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective Dublin and New York, Gill and Macmillan (1978); Nelson, S. Ulster's Uncertain Defenders Belfast, Appletree Press (1984).

52. Stewart, The Narrow Ground p.47.

53. Stewart, The Narrow Ground pp.45-52.

54. See for instance, Gillespie, R. "The End Of An Era: Ulster and the Outbreak of the 1641 Rising' in, Gillespie, R. and Brady, C. Natives and Newcomers Dublin (1986).

55. McDonagh, O. "Times Revenges and Revenge's Time: A View of Anglo-Irish Relations" Anglo-Irish Studies IV (1979) pp.1-19.

56. Stewart, The Narrow Ground p.14.

57. Stewart, The Narrow Ground pp.60-70.

58. See Stewart, A.T.Q. The Ulster Crisis: Resistance to Home Rule, 1912-1914 London, Faber and Faber (1967).

59. The text of the Covenant proclaims; Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V., humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant throughout this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a parliament being forced upon us we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right we hereto subscribe our names. And further we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant....God save the King.

60. Women were not permitted to sign the covenant, because it represented a willingness to bear arms if necessary.

61. The specific wording of the old Scottish Covenants was rejected, probably because of their vigorously anti-popish rhetoric. But their spirit animated the framers of the Ulster Covenant, and there was a widespread awareness among those who signed it of the continuity of purpose. See Miller, Queen's Rebels p.97.

62. Quoted in the Belfast Newsletter 20.9.1912.

63. Miller, Queen's Rebels p.12.

64. Miller, Queen's Rebels p.25.

65. Du Toit sketches the possibility that the contemporary, as distinct from the later, mythological, meaning of the trekker covenant might have been of this sort: "It is possible that some clues to the contemporary meaning of the trekker covenant might be found in the significance attached to oaths and sworn allegiances by many early Afrikaners. There are indications that frontiersmen regarded the oaths sworn by heemraden and veldkornets on taking office to be of great consequence, and on a number of occasions the significance of political enterprises was marked by some sort of collective vow...." See du Toit, "Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm..." p.78, at note 72.

66. MacIver, M.A. "Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition" Political Studies Vol. 35 September 1987 pp.359-78 at p.368.

67. MacIver, "Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition" p.376.

68. See for example, McNeill, R. Ulster's Stand for Union London, John Murray (1922); Falls, C. The Birth of Ulster London, Methuen (1936); Hyde, H.M. Carson London, Octagon (1975).

69. The best examples are two poets, Louis MacNeice and John Hewitt. MacNeice in Autumn Journal (especially at Canto XVI) makes plain his scepticism of Ireland's rival sectarian mythologies, referring in explicit disparagement of Protestant mythology to "the grocer drunk with the drum". Hewitt's dissenting voice tries to fashion an identity which requires neither exclusivism or domination, especially in poems like, "Once Alien Here", "The Green Shoot", "The Irish Dimension". See Warner, A. (ed.) The Selected John Hewitt Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1981); Clyde, T. (ed.), Ancestral Voices: the selected Prose of John Hewitt Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1987); E. R. Dodds (ed.) The Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice London, Faber and Faber (1966).

70. See, Whyte, J.H. "How is the Boundary Maintained Between the Two Communities in Northern Ireland?" in Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 9 (2) April 1986 pp.218-234.

71. See Stewart, The Narrow Ground p.66.

72. Marching is by no means confined to 'the Twelfth'. There are annual 'seasons' for marching which take up several weeks of the calendar.

73. See Stewart, The Narrow Ground pp.128-37; Gibbon, P. The

Origins of Ulster Unionism Manchester, Manchester University Press (1975) Chapter 2; Miller, Queen's Rebels pp.60-64.

74. Stewart, The Narrow Ground p.137.

75. Townshend, C. Political Violence in Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1983) p.43.

76. Whyte, How is the Boundary maintained.. p.222.

77. Miller, Queen's Rebels p.60.

78. Rose, R. Governing without Consensus: An Irish Perspective London, Faber and Faber (1971) p.257.

79. Whyte, How the Boundary is Maintained p.24.

80. On this point, especially in its relevance to the support of the Belfast Protestant working class, and labour movement for Unionism, see Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism.

81. Brown, "The Whole Protestant Community..." p.8.

82. Akenson, God's Peoples p.82.

83. On marching as a source of confrontation, see Townshend, Political Violence in Ireland pp.38-46; Boyd, A. Holy War in Belfast Tralee, Anvil Books (1969). On "territoriality" see Boal, F. "Territoriality in Belfast" in G. Bell and H. Newby (eds.) The Sociology of Community London, Cass (1974).

84. Miller, Queen's Rebels p.64.

85. On the importance of Christian National education see Akenson, God's Peoples pp.83-88 and pp.216-24. On the inculcation of obedience see p.222. Schooling for Ulster Protestants has tended to reflect the values of metropolitan Britain -- in the teaching of history for example -- rather than the parochial concerns of Ulster Unionism. This is another way in which Ulster Protestant mythology stands in juxtaposition to establishment values.

86. Giliomee, "Constructing Afrikaner Nationalism.." p.85.

87. Emphases vary greatly of course. Giliomee acknowledges the strength of these inherent beliefs in the nineteenth century, and argues a strong degree of continuity between this and later phases. O'Meara treats the mythology much more as a manufactured gloss on class interests specific to the 1920s and 1930s, treating cursorily, or ignoring altogether earlier manifestations of group consciousness. Du Toit specifically attacks the notion that the idea of the Afrikaners as a chosen people was widespread at all before the late nineteenth century. The effect of his argument presumably is (in Rude's terms), that it was entirely "derived", and not at all "inherent".

88. When a special commission of Unionists submitted the text of the old Scottish Covenant to the Protestant churches for approval, "...The Presbyterians .. insisted that the obligation on the signatories should be confined to the present crisis, as no one could foresee what circumstances might arise in the future, a most prudent qualification as later events were to prove." Stewart, The Ulster Crisis

p.61. This sort of evidence casts doubt on Akenson's attempts to argue that Ulster Presbyterians saw themselves as a chosen people. See God's People p.150.

89. See Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom pp.175-207.

90. See Thompson, The Political Mythology of Apartheid pp.212-229.

91 See for instance the digests of scholarly papers published in "The Great Trek: A Survey", a supplement to the Financial Mail (2 September 1988). See especially the contributions by Prof. F.A. van Jaarsveld.

PART TWO

THE MATURITY OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST AND AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITIONS

CHAPTER FOUR

STATE, SOCIETY AND PARTY IN NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER ULSTER UNIONIST RULE AND SOUTH AFRICA UNDER AFRIKANER NATIONALIST RULE

The successful mobilisation of disparate social groups into political coalitions enabled the Ulster Unionist Party and the Afrikaner National Party to achieve political power and for long periods to preside over what in each case was a de facto one party state. Unionist rule in Northern Ireland lasted from 1921 to 1972 and in South Africa, the National Party will continue to hold the governing power it acquired in 1948 until the formation of a Transitional Executive Authority, probably in late 1993. Given the similar elements in both situations -- colonial settlement, ethnic and racial divisions, industrialisation, imperial relationships -- it is scarcely surprising that there are similarities in the states and political systems that the two movements built. Firstly, both states were formed in such a way as to manufacture pseudo-democratic majorities by means of partition. Northern Ireland's creation in a single stroke of partition and South Africa's evolution towards grand apartheid reflected in their different ways the aspirations of minorities to become majorities.

Other similar features might usefully be summarised as follows; both states suffered from endemic legitimacy crises; formal and informal discrimination in political, social and economic spheres was necessary for the

functioning and reproduction of both states; there was no clear distinction between state and party in both cases; political conflict in both systems was reduced largely (and sometimes completely) to issues of security and survival of the state, with opposition equated to disloyalty or even treason; both states relied on formidable arsenals of repressive legislation and coercive forces for their continued existence.

Before discussing the political, social and economic changes which produced dilemmas of reform and reaction, leading in turn to the fragmentation of the Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist power blocs, it will be useful to discuss the Northern Ireland state and the Afrikaner nationalist state, each in turn and in terms of the features listed above.

STATE, SOCIETY AND PARTY IN NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER UNIONIST RULE

Until the onset of the crisis precipitated by the campaign of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in the mid-sixties, unionist rule in Northern Ireland was stable, though never fully legitimate. The principal characteristics of unionist rule were shaped by the disputed status of the territory. The partition of Ireland came about as a result of a violent clash of national identities;

The truth in crude terms is that both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland were created by a combination of military force and popular will.¹

In this sense, both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland had revolutionary origins in movements of popular resistance to imperial authority. Although the weakness of

the IRA in the north-east of Ireland meant that the Anglo-Irish War was fought largely in the south and west, communal rioting, shipyard pogroms, terrorist attacks and reprisals accounted for 455 deaths in Belfast between 1920 and 1922, with 1 700 wounded.² Aside from the local disturbances, Ulster Protestants were in any case all too aware of the embattled and insecure position of Unionists in the rest of Ireland.³

Legitimacy

The clash of identities and the violence which surrounded Northern Ireland's birth between 1920 and 1922,⁴ meant that from the beginning, Unionist rule faced two challenges to its legitimacy. The first arose from the irredentism of the Irish Free State and the second from the disaffection of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. In reality, Irish Nationalists showed varying degrees of understanding of the Ulster problem,⁵ but (writing of 1920-22 and the establishment of the Northern Ireland state) Lee refers to the "immaturity of nationalist thinking about Ulster", and concludes that, "...All nationalists, whatever their position on the Treaty, insisted on misinterpreting the Ulster situation".⁶ This was not an auspicious basis on which to deal with the reality of a neighbouring state, and the official position of the Irish Free State (and later Republic) became the claim to the whole 'national territory' of Ireland, that is, the full geographical extent of the island. The claim was embodied in the Irish Constitution of 1937 (Articles 2 and 3).⁷ and although Irish governments were unable or unwilling to contemplate coercion, or indeed any other concrete move to make good the claim,⁸ this threat from the outside to the legitimacy of Northern Ireland coloured all aspects of politics there, to the extent that

one recent study concludes that Irish nationalism was "Unionism's greatest support".⁹

The attitudes of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland to the newly-founded state, like those of nationalists in the Free State, were not homogeneous, and there is room for speculation on whether some sort of negotiated allegiance might have been secured in the early days.¹⁰ Clearly there was a symbiotic relationship between Unionist intransigence and Catholic alienation in which it is difficult to find a first or dominant term. Certainly however, by the late twenties, conscious acts of policy by the Unionist government like the abandonment of proportional representation in elections to the Northern Ireland parliament¹¹ and the ruthless gerrymandering of local electoral boundaries, left northern Catholics thoroughly marginalised and alienated.

Despite the shades of nationalist opinion north and south of the border, and discounting the Unionists' own contribution to the situation, it was neither far-fetched nor unjust for them to see themselves faced by an irredentist neighbour and a potential fifth-column among the disaffected of their own fellow citizens. The effect of this perception was to make the legitimacy of the state the central issue in politics. It imparted a quality of urgency to mundane matters of electoral choice and at times an atmosphere of crisis.¹² It affected the politics of the governing party by putting an imperative premium on unity. It affected the politics of government by equating loyalty to party with loyalty to the state. Finally it affected the politics of opposition by blurring the distinctions between the violent irredentism of the IRA, the diplomatic irredentism of the Free State/Republic, and the nationalism of the elected

representatives of the Catholic minority in the Northern Ireland parliament¹³.

Discrimination

The question of discrimination is widely recognised as central to the history of Northern Ireland between partition in 1922 and the imposition of direct rule by the British Government in 1972. The report of the Cameron Commission¹⁴ into the disorders of August 1969 which arose out of the campaign for civil rights and militant Protestant reaction to it, confirmed Catholic claims of unfair treatment and gave official recognition to them. The commission summarised the areas of discrimination as; housing allocation, local government employment, gerrymandering of local government boundaries and partisan law-enforcement. It would be wrong to state however that there is a consensus on the nature, extent, and significance of discrimination under Unionist rule. At one extreme, there is the view that discrimination was the cement which kept the Unionist alliance together, and was therefore crucially important for the reproduction of the state.

..Unionist businessmen won their mass support through the Orange Order and by fostering and exploiting differences between Protestant and Catholic in the North. They consolidated that support by discrimination against Catholics in the industries and local councils which they controlled. Once in power in the new state, they had ample opportunity to step up discrimination and strengthen their position by gerrymandering and wholesale political repression.¹⁵

On the other hand, Unionist publicists defend the record of the regime,¹⁶ and academic debate has produced sharply diverging estimates of the extent and importance of

discrimination.¹⁷ Two recent, judicious summaries of the published research¹⁸ come to similar conclusions; that discrimination was pervasive, but neither as extreme nor as essential to the maintenance of the state as some writers suggest. Both in fact quote with approval the same third source, in concluding that there was, "a consistent and irrefutable pattern of deliberate discrimination against Catholics".¹⁹

One-partyism and the politics of security

For Richard Rose, a political regime is formed by, "...the institutions coordinating the civil administration, the police and the military within a state".²⁰ Writing in 1971 he argued that one of the central characteristics of Northern Ireland under the Unionists was that:

...the empirical distinction between the regime and government is difficult to establish, for a single party, the Unionist, has been exclusively and continuously in power since the regime was established.²¹

Patrick Buckland saw in Unionist governments, "the triumph of parochialism and partisanship",²² in which the cabinet was typically "an executive committee of Northern business and commerce",²³ closely integrated with the local community and susceptible to its influence. The civil service, and as we shall see, the police and the higher ranks of the judiciary were all closely identified with the Unionist Party. The system of government which developed was "...an informal style of administration inimical to long-term and overall planning",²⁴ in which party supporters had privileged access ensuring 'doles' and discrimination in their favour. An enduring pattern was quickly set by the benevolence, paternalism and drift of Northern Ireland's first prime minister Sir James Craig. Under him, "the desire

to conciliate local interest groups made difficult the development of long term and consistent policies".²⁵

Although Northern Ireland was formally endowed with the apparatus of parliamentary democracy, its political system did not possess in practice the fluidity which is the mark of a functioning democracy. Elections were no more than "sectarian head counts",²⁶ especially after the abolition of proportional representation in local elections (1922) and for the Stormont parliament (1929).²⁷ The Unionists made no bones about what was required;

What I want to get in this house and what I believe we will get very much better in this house under the old fashioned plain and simple system, are men who are for the Union on the one hand, or who are against it and want to go into a Dublin parliament on the other.²⁸

The referendum-like quality of Northern Ireland elections received powerful confirmation in the Ireland Act (1949) of the Westminster parliament. Passed in response to the declaration of the Irish Republic, the act stated:

Northern Ireland remains part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom, and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.²⁹

The effect of the act was immediate:

Sir Basil Brooke showed himself an apt pupil of Craig by calling a snap election to rally dissident Unionists to him and to squelch the Northern Ireland Labour Party. He naturally won a resounding victory.³⁰

The effects of sectarian polarisation in Northern Ireland's politics are illustrated well in the history of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) which articulated the labourist concerns of the predominantly Protestant skilled working class.³¹ Founded in 1924, modelled on the British Labour Party and with close links to trade unions, the NILP was faced from the beginning with the problem of what attitude to take to partition and the Northern Ireland state.

In effect Labour in the North had decided to face the reality of partition and had begun to make a serious attempt to gain political power in the new parliament. It made no firm commitment on the national question, however, refusing to make any explicit declaration of loyalty to the new state or any intimation of desire to see a united Ireland brought about.³²

In this situation, Unionists could brand the NILP as disloyal, nationalists could accuse it of being anti-national and the Roman Catholic hierarchy could announce the incompatibility of socialism and Catholicism.³³ Within the party itself the issue of partition was very divisive.³⁴ The declaration of the Republic in the 26 counties and the Ireland Act forced the NILP into a decision on the issue of partition and at the party's conference in 1949 it adopted an explicitly Unionist position. This did not assist it in the election held that year. Its candidates were shouted down and driven from platforms by Protestant extremists. The two seats it held in the previous election were lost to the Unionists.³⁵

With elections reduced to sectarian head counts, and all political differences reducible to the issue of the legitimacy of the state, the Unionist Party under the Stormont system was inescapably more than a political party.

It was the embodiment both of the community it represented and of the state which guaranteed the continued self-determination of that community.

Repressive legislation and the organs of coercion

Given that legitimacy and security were such central preoccupations in Northern Ireland under Unionist rule it is scarcely surprising that policing, the legal system and specific repressive statutes were controversial features of the regime. Both the immediate context of Northern Ireland's creation and the longer and broader context of Irish history bequeathed a violent legacy to the new state. Agrarian violence, sectarian urban rioting, guerrilla war, paramilitary mobilisation and coercive imperial rule all cast their shadow into the present, while the IRA's determination to use force to unite Ireland projected openly into the future. As a result, Northern Ireland's security system was quite aberrant by the standards of the British state, of which it was part, and of Western democracy generally. This showed itself in three ways; the nature of the regular and reserve police forces; the association between legal officers of the state and the Unionist Party; the extent of repressive powers possessed by the government.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) differed in three principal ways from British police forces. Firstly, it was (and remains) a centralised body; in the context of Northern Ireland it is a 'national' force. As a result, it was subject to close political direction by the Unionist minister of home affairs. Secondly it was (and remains) a paramilitary force with a prominent internal security function, armed as a matter of course, and with access to armoured vehicles and infantry weapons. Thirdly, the RUC

relied heavily on an armed reserve force of civilians to carry out its security functions.

Of these features, the last is the most important. The Ulster Special Constabulary (USC, generally known as 'the 'B' Specials') was the most characteristic institution of the Northern Ireland state.³⁶ The formation of the Specials in November 1920 served four functions; the old UVF was re-mobilised, demonstrating to the British government and Irish nationalists the extent of loyalist opposition to a nationalist takeover; loyalist militants were brought under military discipline; the British government was induced to finance security forces in Northern Ireland, but to leave them under local control; a force was created which could combat IRA guerrillas in the North and save the region from 'anarchy.'³⁷ Of these, the last was probably the least important, given the weakness of the IRA in counties where there was a Protestant majority. But the first three, "...gave institutional expression to a Protestant vigilantism which was both traditional and -- in its own terms -- effective".³⁸

The RUC, then, followed the colonial model of the Royal Irish Constabulary rather than British examples. It was responsible directly to the state rather than the community, and internal security rather than crime prevention was its principal function. Although the initial aim was for Catholics to comprise one third of the regular force (the proportion of Catholics in the population of Northern Ireland), the actual figures showed steady decline from 23% in 1923 and 17% in 1929, to 10% in 1960.³⁹ The 'B' Specials on the other hand constituted an exclusively Protestant force.⁴⁰ In sum, the establishment and development of local security forces in Northern Ireland amounted to "...the subordination in practice of policing to the political

direction of the Unionist government", and a process that
 "..was turning the police into an armed wing of Unionism".⁴¹

The administration of justice in Northern Ireland also
 conformed to the pattern of near-monopoly of important state
 offices for Protestants: "...supervising the administration
 of justice was an overwhelmingly Protestant judiciary,
 integrated into the Ulster Unionist Party, and often the
 Orange Order".⁴² At the time of the Civil Rights campaign in
 the sixties:

Of the twenty high court judges appointed
 since 1922, fifteen had been openly
 associated with the Unionist Party and
 fourteen of the county court appointments had
 similar associations. Resident magistrates
 had also been drawn from the same source.⁴³

In 1970, out of the seven High Court Judges, three were
 former Unionist MPs and the fourth was the son of a Unionist
 minister.⁴⁴ The composition of juries aggravated this
 situation. According to Hillyard, property qualifications,
 and the rules for challenging jurors ensured that, "...most
 juries, particularly in Belfast, were Protestant".⁴⁵ The
 overall result of this domination by Unionists was that:

They closed prospects for using the law as a
 mechanism for the protection of the civil
 liberties of the minority -- although there
 is little evidence that the Catholic
 nationalist minority tried to use the legal
 system for redress of their grievances.⁴⁶

Certainly, the perception of Catholics was that the legal
 system was biased against them:

Criminal charges are preferred much more
 forcefully against Catholics than against any
 other section of the population, both in
 selecting the number and nature of the
 charges to be brought (and) in the

seriousness or otherwise of the Act under which the charges are brought.⁴⁷

The legislative centrepiece of this partisan coercive system was the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (1922). The Special Powers Act (as it came to be known in practice) was in the tradition of earlier British coercion acts in Ireland, by whose standards, according to one authority, it was, "...not immoderate".⁴⁸ Nonetheless, by the standards of mainland Britain, the Act effectively suspended the rule of law and gave very wide discretion indeed to the Executive. Perhaps the Act's most damaging attack on the principle of the rule of law reads:

If any person does any act of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of the peace or maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations he shall be deemed guilty of an offence against the regulations.⁴⁹

Indeed the only restraint on executive power was the expressed intention that "the ordinary course of law and avocations of life and the enjoyment of property shall be interfered with as little as may be permitted by the exigencies of the steps required to be taken under this Act".⁵⁰ This expression of good intentions was, of course, entirely at the mercy of political discretion. As Edwards points out, even the ultimate responsibility of the Executive to parliament for its actions was rendered ineffectual by the absence of an effective opposition.⁵¹

The Special Powers Act came to stand for the whole system of coercive domination which underpinned Unionist rule in Northern Ireland, and it was the centrepiece of Catholic and nationalist protests against repression and discrimination. Perhaps its most objectionable feature was that although it

was passed into law at a time of turbulence and widespread political violence, it remained on the statute book even in times of stability as a reminder of Catholics' subordination as a community, and of the fusion of party, state, and legal system which Unionist rule represented.⁵² The endemic legitimacy crisis of the state in Northern Ireland could scarcely be better symbolised.

STATE, SOCIETY AND PARTY UNDER NATIONALIST RULE IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is always difficult, and usually misleading, to be too precise about when historical processes begin and end. Most recent analyses of Afrikaner Nationalism treat it as a phenomenon created in response to certain material conditions, and subject to change as these social, political and economic conditions change.⁵³ It is always difficult to attempt a periodisation of a social movement, and assert that its true or essential nature was revealed at any given point. It can be argued however that in the period between the post-Sharpeville recovery in the sixties and the onset of the political and economic crisis of the mid-seventies, Afrikaner Nationalism and the political system it created had reached a kind of stable maturity.⁵⁴ Afrikaner Nationalism was a movement which claimed to embody the interests and aspirations of a people irrespective of region, class, denomination or other difference. It was led by a political party, and rested on a base of educational, cultural and other social organisations.⁵⁵ The movement was not monolithic, but all-embracing and united. It had an organising ideology, which did not mean the same thing to all,⁵⁶ but which served as a focal point, giving direction, justification and interpretation. The people (the volk) in question was defined in terms of its separateness from imperialism (metropolitan and local) and from the black

majority. Relatively few in number, and lacking geographic concentration, Afrikaner Nationalists were forced to stress unity at all costs in their political organisation. They set out to concoct a system, through partition and repression, in which they would be in a majority. This 'white South Africa' would satisfy them (if no-one else) in terms of self-rule, democracy, and material interest.

Legitimacy

This system lacked both domestic and international legitimacy. The obsessive concern with racial classification and the assignment of rights and status on the basis of race which the systematic application of apartheid after 1948 represented, seemed a direct echo of the Nazi racism which had been punished in the Nuremberg Trials. The signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949 demonstrated that there would be henceforth a standard and an instrument in whose name to deny legitimacy to apartheid. The fashioning of an anti-colonial and anti-racist consensus in the United Nations ensured that there would be a pressure group to pursue this aim. Landmarks in this process were the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961, the revocation of South Africa's UN mandate for South West Africa in 1966, the Lusaka Manifesto in 1968 and in 1971, the defeat for states in the OAU favouring dialogue with South Africa.

Of course, South Africa lacked international legitimacy because it lacked domestic legitimacy from the majority of its people. After the growth and development of African resistance to apartheid in the fifties, culminating in the State of Emergency and Sharpeville Massacre in 1961, it was clear that peaceful political change towards a system regarded as legitimate by the majority was not possible. At

every stage in the struggle between white rule and black resistance, the international and domestic dimensions of the conflict over South Africa's illegitimacy were inseparable. This is made clear by the prominence given to the international campaign against apartheid in the ANC's mutually reinforcing, 'Four Pillars' of the struggle against apartheid.⁵⁷

Discrimination

The lack of international and domestic legitimacy is attributable in large measure to the fact that the South African state was grounded in racial discrimination. It is widely accepted that the hallmark of the apartheid system -- its uniqueness even -- lies not in the presence of racial discrimination which is pervasive, if not universal in world politics, but in the way it was given backing in the constitution, the institutions, and every aspect of the state's structures and purposes.⁵⁸ Allied to this central characteristic were a number of other important features.

Firstly, the system of discrimination which apartheid represented covered virtually the whole range of human activity and interaction. Anthony Lemon⁵⁹ usefully emphasises three principal dimensions of the system; the 'micro-scale' of petty apartheid involving discriminatory access to amenities; 'meso-scale' segregation of the Group Areas Act and associated legislation; and 'macro-scale' measures through which African political aspirations were intended to be channelled into territories successively labelled, 'bantustans', 'homelands' and 'national states'. Similarly, John Dugard classifies the law of apartheid into two kinds of measure, "...those which prescribe the personal, social, economic, cultural, and educational status of the individual in society" and "...those laws which construct the

institutions of separate development and determine the political status of the individual".⁶⁰.

Discrimination on this scale required not merely the perpetuation of colonial practices which the Nationalists inherited, but also an ambitious programme of social engineering. It required ruthless coercion in carrying out this programme and an elaborate ideological justification, which reflected a high sense of purpose to elevate it beyond mere self-interest. De Klerk describes this in terms of, " a most rational, most passionate, most radical will to restructure the world according to a vision of justice; all with a view to lasting peace, progress and prosperity".⁶¹ In essence, the survival of the state required a universal system of discrimination, and discrimination on this scale could not be left to individual choice, custom, or informal centres of social and economic power. Protection of Afrikaners' interests (and those of whites in general) could not be left to self-help. Indeed the very definition of these interests was increasingly an elite activity practised in universities, research organisations and social movements which formed a network enveloping both party and state.

One-partyism and the politics of security

A state built on such foundations of discrimination and ethnic particularism could only exist as a de facto one-party state, in which although other (white) parties were allowed to exist, there was a fusion between party and state. Indeed there was a fusion between people, party and state, woven together by religious⁶² and cultural organisations, which created an expectation of privileged access to state resources.⁶³ As one authority put it in the late 1980s, the National Party, "...has virtually become synonymous with the South African state and white

domination".⁶⁴ Having won a narrow victory in 1948, the Nationalists secured their domination of the formal political institutions (notably in the constitutional struggle over the rights of coloured voters), and progressively identified themselves with the main bureaucratic and coercive arms of the state:

.. preference was increasing given to party men in appointments and promotions in the armed forces, the police and public service, the diplomatic service, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the judiciary. In some areas, the Gleichschaltung was achieved by a slow war of attrition against non-Nationalists. Competent policemen or consular figures would find comparative juniors promoted over their heads, and resign. In other areas, notably the army, the Nationalist takeover had the aspect of a bloodless purge.⁶⁵

This process was greatly facilitated by the ambitious programmes of economic nationalism and social engineering, which required large scale extension and ramification of the state apparatuses. In this way, Afrikaner economic interests were built up by and in the state.

Institutions which linked agricultural cooperatives to financial institutions on the one hand and to the party on the other, served to give these interests cohesion. So too did those state corporations directly involved in production, like the iron and steel industry (IsCOR) and the publicly owned transportation and communications networks.⁶⁶

Also useful in building up a one-party patronage state were the numerous bureaucracies set up to administer and oversee the various manifestations of apartheid. These included racial classification, residential segregation and education, and the political and economic development of the

'homelands'. The scale and range of government activity grew enormously under the Nationalist government. By the mid-1970s, the central bureaucracy comprised 38 state departments and their adjuncts (including advisory boards, councils and commissions), 28 public corporations, 22 agricultural control boards and nine national research institutes.⁶⁷ The duplication of departments and services in the (then) seven 'self-governing' homelands, and in the administration of the coloured and Asian populations, greatly swelled the proliferation of the bureaucracy.⁶⁸

Stadler regards the Nationalists as, "... not especially venal in respect of patronage",⁶⁹ but aside from questions of the abuse of power, strong influences promoted a fusion of state and party. Firstly, apartheid was such a doctrinaire and ambitious programme of social engineering, and so absolutely identified with the National Party that there was simply no room for a neutral public service; self-selection if nothing else ensured that. Secondly, so completely did the National Party come to dominate white electoral politics in the fifties, sixties and seventies, that a close identity between party and state was inevitable. Thirdly, the identification of the National Party with key state symbols, and most particularly with the achievement of republican status for South Africa, also brought state and party together.

Although they were embedded in a racially exclusive context, the formal elements of parliamentary democracy were important ingredients in legitimising and reproducing the state under Nationalist rule. Even within this context however, these formally democratic elements were severely attenuated by security legislation, which greatly encroached upon civil liberties and shielded the government from public scrutiny and accountability. Perhaps more importantly, the

informal conventions of democratic systems were also conspicuously absent. The notion, in particular, that alternation in government is possible (and desirable) because voters make choices on past record and policy potential was not applicable to South African politics, certainly after 1948. The National Party was successful in making voter choice a matter of ethnic loyalty and racial solidarity. In effect, politics became a matter of security and demography.⁷⁰ Electoral politics did not concern competing claims to managerial competence in the economy, social legislation and foreign policy. Elections were, effectively, calls for a united people to express itself in referenda on its destiny. Throughout the years of building and consolidating apartheid, the National Party equated opposition to it with 'alien ideologies', like communism and liberalism, with external forces like British imperialism or third-world radicalism, and above all with the threat of black rule, the 'swart gevaar' of so many election speeches and pamphlets.

Repressive legislation and the organs of coercion

It is not surprising that to impose this enormously ambitious and far-ranging system of social control and legally-sanctioned inequality on the majority of the South African population and in the face of prevailing movements and values in world politics, required extensive and stringent coercive powers and a well-developed security apparatus to apply them. Both aspects of repression are well documented, the legal framework rather more fully than the security forces.⁷¹

If the most central characteristic of apartheid was the way in which the distance between communities was maintained by

statutory differences in status, this phenomenon was taken to its logical conclusion by the criminalisation of Africans' lives through the medium of offences against race statutes, principally 'pass laws' controlling movement. In 1947, 418 000 prosecutions under these laws amounted to 41% of all prosecutions, and in 1967 the figures were 1,043,000 and 44%.⁷² Writing in 1974, Sachs calculated that "...one African man in two can expect to see the inside of jail every decade".⁷³ This is a further indication of the extent to which questions of identity, association and discrimination were taken out of the hands of the population and vested in the state. The extent to which lives (especially African lives) were formally policed under apartheid laws has led some authorities to note that 'informal' oppression was less necessary than in other systems where a high consciousness of ethnicity and practice of discrimination co-existed with formal concern for democratic norms. M.G. Smith writes, for instance;

While South African whites did not need a Ku Klux Klan since state police actively enforced the rules of apartheid, in the Southern United States, given juridical restraints on their personal conduct, police and other state employees could not openly undertake such violent illegal activities as burning appropriate buildings or lynching suitable scapegoats that were regarded as essential to 'keep the negroes in order'.⁷⁴

Sachs makes essentially the same point, "It is the pervasiveness of the court system that helps explain why lynching has been virtually unknown in South Africa", stressing the extent to which the law and the courts made self-help unnecessary for whites.⁷⁵

The all-embracing nature of apartheid legislation, and the pervasiveness of the court system also help to explain the

apparent paradox that although South Africa exhibited a very high degree of social control, the country ranked low on indices of police manpower per head of population;

... in 1984 the regular force comprised only 44 696 officers. Despite the authoritarian nature of the South African state, this represented only 1.4 policemen and women per thousand of population, comparing favourably with liberal democratic countries. The South African ratio has oscillated around this proportion since the inception of the SAP.⁷⁶

Frankel dismisses this apparent contradiction by pointing to the fact that, "...formal police manpower is supplemented by the resources of other functionally compatible government agencies and by the embedding of police activity in a dense, informal and quasi-informal social network".⁷⁷ Police manpower is also supplemented by the resources of municipal township police, the Reserve Police Force (a white citizen unit, founded in 1961) and the Police Reserve (1972), composed of ex-policemen and national servicemen. Although since 1961, the ratio of white to black policemen has oscillated around 1:1.07,⁷⁸ the authority structure has been overwhelmingly white-dominated. Uniform, pay, and service differentials between black and white, and inequalities in access to commissioned rank, were enormous until the late 1970s, and although many of the conditions have been equalised, the hierarchy is overwhelmingly white. It has also been, and remained, overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking. Sachs estimated that ninety per cent of entrants to the force in the mid-seventies gave Afrikaans as their first language, with the obvious inference that their political allegiances lay with the National Party.⁷⁹

Uninterrupted Nationalist control of the legislature and executive after 1948 meant that the regime was able to call

into being a very wide range of powerful security legislation to give authority to the pattern of partisan policing outlined above. Beginning with the banning and suppression of political organisations in the 1950s and continuing with the refinement and extension of detention without trial in the 1960s and the dramatic ramification of categories of offence like terrorism and sabotage in the 1970s, the apparatus of political offences, trials and imprisonment was developed to meet each challenge to the state.⁸⁰ The judiciary which applied and interpreted this legislation was exclusively white, but although this (and the oppressive and discriminatory nature of the laws themselves) has led black people in recent years to, "...the inevitable conclusion that blacks must expect little or no justice from the courts",⁸¹ even authors critical of, or even hostile to the government's, security legislation are reluctant to describe the judiciary as clearly partisan.⁸²

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

The states and political systems fashioned by Ulster Unionists and Afrikaner Nationalists in response to the predicament of finding themselves among an alien and (in their perceptions) hostile majority had as common features, legitimacy crisis, discrimination, de facto one partyism, and a marked reliance on repression. Despite this, there were important differences of emphasis which, as the two grappled with renewed and altered political crisis and the demands of transition, ensured that each had its unique trajectory of change.

Contested legitimacy has been the characteristic feature of both Northern Ireland under the Unionists, and South Africa under Nationalist rule. The metaphor of siege has

frequently, indeed routinely, been used of both. The consequences of contested legitimacy have included the high premium on unity among Ulster Protestants and Afrikaner Nationalists, and the branding of opposition as 'disloyal', subversive or downright treasonable. This in turn has been used to justify narrow limits on political expression and permanent recourse to repressive measures more usually associated with emergencies.

Although a permanent legitimacy crisis had the effect of fusing internal and external elements of the situation in both cases, and shaped their political dynamics both in periods of stasis and (as we shall see) rapid change, there were important differences. While the legitimacy of Nationalist rule was contested exclusively in terms of human rights, racial justice and the right of self-determination, Northern Ireland's legitimacy crisis was widely understood in terms of irredentism.⁸³ The human rights aspect of the claims and complaints of Northern Ireland's Catholic minority was relatively muted until the 1960s, by comparison with demands which focus on the indivisibility of the Irish national territory and the Irish people. This was one of the factors effectively insulating the Stormont regime from external attention and pressure in the first four decades of its existence. Indeed a change of emphasis favouring human rights rather than re-unification on the part of the Catholic opposition in Northern Ireland and the government of the Irish Republic, was the key element in the new crisis which Unionists faced from the mid-sixties onwards. Since this time, questions of international legitimacy have played a role in the Northern Ireland conflict,⁸⁴ but with nothing like the same intensity and pervasiveness of concern as displayed by the anti-apartheid struggle.

The most obvious difference in the two systems of discrimination was of sheer extent. The full-blown apparatus of differential statuses imposed by force which marked South Africa, simply did not exist in Northern Ireland, and the political, social and economic inequalities were nothing like as gross there. Two other differences, less obvious perhaps, but arguably just as important (in the context of this study at least), are worth considering.

The first is the fact that the apparatus of discrimination in South Africa was not only more extensive and elaborate but much more formal. It was more formal in three ways; discrimination had the official backing of the law of the land; the state and the public sector of the economy were used with great purpose and vigour to favour not only whites in general but Afrikaners in particular; discrimination against blacks was justified by a very elaborate ideological construct of racial ideas and assumptions.

By contrast, in Northern Ireland, Protestants could not rely to anything like the extent of Afrikaners on law and the state for the reproduction of their privileges. To an important extent, discrimination at the work-place was something which had to be maintained by their own efforts and vigilance, in which the traditions of Orangeism were invaluable. This vigilance had to be maintained politically too; the traditions of ultra-sectarianism and labourism did not by any means die out after the foundation of the Northern Ireland state and the unity of Ulster Unionism was more fragile than that of Afrikaner Nationalism. The relative informality of discrimination is suggested by the fact that discriminatory practices were unevenly spread throughout Northern Ireland, with local authority discrimination being noticeably greater in areas bordering

on the Irish Republic, where Protestants had only a narrow demographic superiority, or none at all.

Catholic sensitivities were shaped by the more blatant discriminatory practices stretching back to the foundation of the state and beyond, that Protestants deemed necessary to protect at local level their vulnerable majorities and even more frequently their vulnerable minorities".⁸⁵

This contrasts sharply with the structured, elaborated and universal system of discrimination which the Nationalists developed.

Until quite recently, white supremacist ideologies gave elaborate reasons for discrimination against blacks in South Africa, but in Northern Ireland there was only one reason to favour Protestants, the issue of 'loyalty'. For all these reasons, and because the period of Nationalist rule between 1948 and the mid-1970s was one of sustained economic growth, Afrikaners had much more security in their privilege. Protestants had a margin of security over Catholics, but this was in an overall atmosphere of insecurity and economic decline.⁸⁶ Latent tensions between the components of the Unionist alliance were more of a feature than in Afrikaner Nationalism, and the possibilities of independent action more marked.

The second main difference lay in the purposes to which discrimination was put. When the Nationalists came to power in 1948 they conformed to Trapido's characterisation:

Afrikaners have always occupied a limited number of roles in the economy; and this has made comparatively easy the political leaders' task of creating homogeneity within the language group. The roles themselves, however, have tended to necessitate the

holding of political power for their protection and advancement. The English language group with its far greater diversity of economic roles could in the thirties and fifties, lose political power and still prosper. Presumably it might continue to prosper if that power was transferred to non-White groups. Not so for the Afrikaner.⁸⁷

The transformatory nature of Afrikaner Nationalism's project ensured that one of the effects of Nationalist rule was social differentiation among Afrikaners, altering the imperatives and priorities emphasised by Trapido, and throwing up a strong impetus for change from within the movement. In Ulster Unionism, these forces were weak or absent altogether.

Although both Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism operated de facto one-party states while paying lip-service to multi-party democracy, here again there were significant differences. These amounted in summary to both party and state being stronger and more highly developed in the case of South Africa. The dominance of the National Party in the wider context of Afrikaner Nationalism was forged in the years of opposition from the birth of the party as the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party in 1933, to its assumption of power in 1948. Vigorous organisational and ideological work was required to achieve this and to defeat the challenge of the semi-fascist rivals, the mass-based, populist Ossewa Brandwag, and the New Order.⁸⁸

By contrast with the National Party, the Ulster Unionist Party looks a more rudimentary organisation, less impressively geared to ongoing political education and mobilisation, more concerned with the limited and episodic function of purely electoral mobilisation. Once again, the difference is usefully illustrated by the contrasting

relationships between the National Party and the Broederbond,⁸⁹ and the Unionist Party and the Orange Order.⁹⁰

The Broederbond fulfilled several roles within Afrikaner Nationalism. It was a party 'think-tank', and a sounding-board through which the rank and file's reaction to policy changes could be tested. It was a way of ensuring Afrikaner advancement and dominance in society by selective placement in elite (especially public sector) jobs. It was (and remains) a secret, indeed cabalistic, organisation. Membership is restricted and self-selected, not made public except by unauthorised leakage. Its functions have been to ensure elite domination within the party, party domination within Afrikaner Nationalism and Afrikaner domination in society.

The Orange Order is secretive (a symptom of masonic influence⁹¹) but not secret. Indeed public displays of ritual solidarity are one of its most characteristic functions. Like the Broederbond it is a self-help organisation in job placement and political advancement. It is not however an elite organisation but a mass one.⁹² Its existence gives a fraternal facade to Unionism which has been crucial in reproducing its unity and reconciling working class Unionists to the divisions of a class society. Another function of the Order has been to contain and discipline the militancy of Protestant extremists -- a perennial theme in the politics of Ulster Unionism -- but the relationship works both ways, in reminding the party of the potency of rank and file sentiment.

In short, where the Broederbond acted as an instrument of elite manipulation and party dominance, the Orange Order reminded the Ulster Unionist Party that it did not enjoy a

comparable dominance, and that the definition of what constituted 'loyalism' did not ultimately rest in its hands.

The dominance of the National Party in Afrikaner Nationalism reflected an increasingly bureaucratic flavour to the movement, diluting, as time went on, the popular element. For Slabbert, this process was symbolised by Malan's premiership after the Nationalists won the 1948 election;

...for the first time in the history of the Afrikaners, a fully fledged 'organisation man' was prime minister. He had been at various times a minister of religion, newspaper editor, and a party political leader. The 'age of the generals' was past and Malan, in a sense, was the symbol of a collective ethos that had been bureaucratised.⁹³

Slabbert further illustrates this trend with reference to the multiple bureaucratic roles of Verwoerd, M.C. Botha and A.P. Treurnicht, concluding that "...the list includes many of the best known figures in Afrikaner public life".⁹⁴ The trend was confirmed by the increasing role played by professional organisers who had known no other occupation, in running the party. The career of P.W. Botha whose route through the party and state organs took him to the office of state president, is appropriately symbolic of a much wider tendency.

By contrast, the Ulster Unionist Party did not display this dense cross-referencing of roles although it did benefit from overlapping support from churches, the Orange Order and newspapers. The party's leaders after the creation of the state were Sir James Craig, a whiskey magnate and landowner, J.M. Andrews, a company director, and Sir Basil Brooke and Captain Terence O'Neill who were both landowners. It is true

that two key party bureaucrats, Sir Richard Dawson Bates and Sir Wilson Hungerford⁹⁵ both became MPs and achieved government office, the former as minister of home affairs (1921-43) and the latter in a variety of parliamentary private secretary posts (1941-46). Between them they held the office of secretary to the Ulster Unionist Council from 1905 to 1941, Hungerford taking over in 1921. These were isolated cases however, and did not reflect the same principle as typified the functioning of the National Party.

This bureaucratic character was greatly heightened by the enormous growth and ramification of the state and its organs which took place under Nationalist rule⁹⁶. This had several effects. By partially Afrikanerising the state and using it as an instrument of ethnic social and economic advance, the Nationalists developed a powerful fusion of material interest and national sentiment which was an important source of party unity, enabling it to prevent and contain splits.⁹⁷ Given that Afrikaners constituted such a small minority in the South African population, however, and the need to broaden the base of support first to include all whites, and later the 'coloured' and Indian minorities, the state could not be wholly Afrikanerised. An opposite trend set in; as the Nationalists Afrikanerised the state, the state secularised nationalism. The state came to represent not only an enormous source of patronage, but a repository of secular loyalties into which other population groups could be incorporated. It increasingly came to eclipse the party as the source of authority of those in power, especially after the late seventies and the contradictions of being both a 'state' party and a 'volk' party were influential sources of discord from this point onwards.

By contrast, the state in Northern Ireland was not wholly independent and in its apparatus and functions served as a

transmission belt for legislation of the British parliament, rather than as a positive instrument for reshaping society in the hands of those who controlled it. Popular (Protestant) loyalties were diffused among the British monarchy, the Protestant religion, the Orange Order and a vague sense of regional identity, rather than focused directly on the state itself. Like the Unionist Party, the state in Northern Ireland was weaker and more fragile than its South African counterpart.

It is in the pattern of partisan policing and the use of emergency, repressive powers as the norm, that some have seen an essential similarity between Northern Ireland under the Unionists and South Africa under Nationalist rule. Whyte's even-handed survey of the Northern Ireland security system (while deploring the lack of hard evidence) implicitly suggests in its overall assessment that this rhetorical device is unjustified;

The fairest summary of police behaviour in Northern Ireland appears to be as follows. The police force could not be seen as consistently impartial, applying the law evenly to everyone, Unionist and non-Unionist alike. On the other hand, it could not be seen as purely partisan, designed to perpetuate Unionist ascendancy and batter into the ground all political opponents.⁹⁸

Mathews' brief comparison of the two security regimes is intended to put the South African provisions in perspective.⁹⁹ His conclusions are unfavourable to them, firstly because security laws should not be justified on the grounds of worst-case repression elsewhere, secondly that the Northern Ireland situation more nearly resembled an ongoing emergency than the South African, and thirdly that at least some legal restrictions and modifications attended the working of the Special Powers Act.

Valuable as such comparisons are, it is in the pattern of policing, rather than the framework of repressive laws that the most interesting points of contrast lie. Although the RUC and the SAP both represent paramilitary, political policing and have notable points of similarity, the phenomenon of the 'B' Specials under the Stormont regime gives something unique to that security system. This does not mean that the South African security forces have been without a part-time reserve component. On the contrary, Commando and Citizen Force units have been an essential part of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and police reservists complement the regular force. But the SADF, despite the Afrikanerisation of its permanent component, has been less determinedly sectarian than the police, an instrument of the state rather than an ethnic force. In any case, the army's deployment on internal security duties came rather late. As for the police, reservists have been very much ancillary rather than central to internal security functions.

By contrast, the 'B' Specials were regarded by many Protestants as the essential front-line force in defence of the state against Catholic nationalist subversion and IRA terrorism, as will be seen when the furore over their disbandment in 1969 is discussed. While the RUC aimed to have a one-third complement of Catholics, the Specials were an exclusively Protestant militia. This armed vigilante force, it should be recalled, was set up as much as the result of local initiatives as by the directive of central government. Its origins, composition and functions were graphic reminders of the popular and revolutionary origins of the Northern Ireland state. It stood for the capacity of Protestants to take the initiative in their own defence and in determining for themselves their own political future,

independent of any legitimately constituted authority. The principal account of the Northern Ireland state under Unionist rule emphasises the importance of the 'B' Specials and their 'populist character':

This amounted to a propensity to sectarianism, to a kind of democracy in which unpopular officers were forced out of the force, and to a voracious appetite for public funds. The primacy accorded to the objective of having such a force therefore required as a strategic imperative the retention of a special relationship between the Unionist leadership and the Protestant masses. Not only were the Specials to occupy a significant position within the state apparatuses, but the latter as a whole were to acquire a decidedly populist character" (emphasis added).¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

The state which was created to accommodate the Unionist coalition's refusal to be part of a united, independent Ireland lasted nearly fifty years before the whole range of relationships which defined its nature and meaning was called into question; the relationships within the Unionist power bloc which sustained it; the relationship with Britain which defined it; the relationships with Irish Nationalists north and south of the border, which supplied its raison d'être. Similarly, the state which the Nationalists in South Africa inherited in 1948, harnessed, elaborated and bent to their will, entered a long period of crisis from the late 1970s in which changing relationships within Afrikaner Nationalism, and between Nationalists and the 'groups' which they defined as 'other', forced the remodelling and sometimes reversal of the state-building processes which had occupied the previous thirty years of their rule.

Both states rested on movements of ethnic unity; both were pseudo-democracies which required partition and exclusionary practices to reproduce support; and both were partisan, making no pretence to be impartial arbiters of conflict. But as the relationships in both cases were questioned, and under this stress the unity of both coalitions began to decay, the differences were highlighted too. Northern Ireland's lack of independence and its relatively rudimentary state forms and resources were important. But central to the issue of the decay of unity were the contrasting natures of the two states; Northern Ireland with its populist, vigilante aspects, and South Africa with its extensive, complex web of state bureaucracies.

1. Boyle, K. and Hadden, T. "How to read the New Ireland Forum Report" Political Quarterly Vol. 55 (4) 1984, pp.403-4.
2. Foster, R.F. Modern Ireland 1600-1972 London, Allen Lane, (1988). p.526.
3. See Dooley, T. "Monaghan Protestants in a Time of Crisis, 1919-22" in, Comerford, G. et al (eds.) Religion, Conflict and Co-existence in Ireland Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1990) pp.234-51.
4. The Government of Ireland Act (1920), by providing for separate parliaments in Dublin and Belfast, made partition possible, although its intention was to hold the country together through the Council of Ireland, a body through which both parliaments could cooperate. The election of a Republican government in Dublin and a Unionist one in Belfast in 1921 effectively symbolised the separation of the two parts of the country, and many would agree with F.S.L. Lyons (Ireland Since the Famine Glasgow, Collins/Fontana, 1973, p.427) that the opening of Stormont, the Belfast parliament, by King George V on 22 June 1922 "set the seal on partition", which was recognised de facto by the Anglo-Irish Treaty (Dec. 1921, ratified by the Irish Parliament Jan. 1922).
5. For explorations of this issue, see O'Halloran, C. Partition and the Limits of Irish Nationalism Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1987); Bowman, J. De Valera and the Ulster Question 1917-73 Oxford, Oxford University Press (1982); Bowman, J. "Sinn Fein's Perception of the Ulster Question: Autumn 1921" The Crane Bag Vol. 4 (1) 1980, pp.687-693; Bew, P. et al, The State in Northern Ireland Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979), pp.64-70.
6. Lee, J. Ireland 1912-85: Politics and Society Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1989), p.53.
7. On the 1937 Constitution see Lee, Ireland pp.201-7 and Foster, Modern Ireland pp.543-7. Both accounts show how in addition to articles (2) and (3) other provisions gave rise to Protestants' legitimate fears for their civil and religious liberty in a united Ireland; "... thus was it demonstrated to Ulster Protestants that the institutions of a United Ireland would be, as they had always claimed, oppressively Catholic." Foster, Modern Ireland p.545.
8. On this point see Foster, Modern Ireland p.555.
9. Kennedy, D. The Widening Gulf: Northern Attitudes to the Independent Irish State 1919-49 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1988), p.240.
10. See Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972 Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979) pp.64-70. [] See also Buckland, The Factory of Grievances: Governing in Northern Ireland 1921-39 Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1979) pp.34-5. A.T.Q. Stewart however paints a picture of unrelieved and uncompromising rejection of the Northern

Ireland by northern Catholics, see The Narrow Ground London, Faber and Faber (1977) pp.171-179.

11. In fact the purpose of this change was more to prevent independent Unionist and labour representatives being elected, but Catholics saw it as a ploy to minimise nationalist representation.

12. Events in the Free State like the framing of the 1937 Constitution, and the declaration of the Republic in 1949 had this effect, as, more seriously, did the IRA campaigns in the early 1940s and in 1956-62.

13. The Nationalist Party in Northern Ireland, the heirs of the old Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, abandoned the policy of abstention early in the life of the Northern Ireland Parliament, but did not adopt the style of 'official' (and hence 'loyal') opposition until 1965.

14. Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland Belfast, HMSO, Cmd. 532. (1970). See especially Para. 229.

15. Farrell, M. Northern Ireland: the Orange State London, Pluto Press (1976) p.326. See also, McCann, E. War and an Irish Town Harmondsworth, Penguin (1974) pp.216-7, and de Paor, L. Divided Ulster Harmondsworth, Penguin (1970) p.146.

16. See for instance, Walmsley, A.J. Northern Ireland: its Policies and Record Belfast, Ulster Unionist Council (1959) and Carson, W.A. Ulster and the Irish Republic Belfast, Cleland (1957). See also, Stewart, A.T.Q. The Narrow Ground pp.174-179; Stewart sees Catholic grievances less in the light of justified complaints of particular discriminations, than as expressions of atavistic quarrels; "The great strength of Catholic criticism of government is its ability to carry over into the local situation of today the inherited Catholic consciousness of the entire Anglo-Irish struggle since it began." p.179.

17. The debate was provoked by, Hewitt, C. "Catholic Grievances, Catholic Nationalism and Violence in Northern Ireland during the Civil Rights Period: a Reconsideration" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 32 (3) 1981, pp.362-80, and a rejoinder by, O'Hearn, D. "Catholic Grievances, Catholic Nationalism: a Comment" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 34 (3) 1983, pp.438-45. The further course of the debate can be followed in subsequent issues of the British Journal of Sociology.

18. Whyte, J. "How much Discrimination was there under the Unionist Regime, 1921-68?" in Gallagher, T. and O'Connell, J. (eds.) Contemporary Irish Studies Manchester, Manchester University Press (1983) pp.1-35; O'Leary, B. and Arthur, P. "Northern Ireland as the Site of State and Nation-building Failures" in O'Leary, B. and McGarry, J. (eds.) The Future of Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990) pp.1-47. See also, Whyte, J. Interpreting Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990) pp.61-4 and 164-9.

19. Darby, J. Conflict in Northern Ireland: the Development of a Polarised Community Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1976)

pp.77-8.

20. Rose, R. Governing Without Consensus London, Faber and Faber (1971) p.26.

21. Rose, Governing without Consensus p.26.

22. Buckland, P. The Factory of Grievances p.278.

23. Buckland, The Factory of Grievances p.278.

24. Buckland, The Factory of Grievances p.272.

25. Buckland, The Factory of Grievances p.26.

26. O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland p.14.

27. One important effect of the abolition of PR was a large number of uncontested seats in Stormont elections, confirming the inflexibility of party choice. See Mansergh, N. The Government of Northern Ireland: A Study in Devolution London, Allen and Unwin (1936) pp.136-138; Whyte, J. The Reform of Stormont Belfast, New Ulster Movement (1971) pp.3-4 and pp.14-16; Rose, Governing Without Consensus.

28. Sir James Craig, Northern Ireland's prime minister, Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates (Commons), quoted in O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland p.14.

29. Section 1 (2). The clause was inserted at the request of the then prime minister of Northern Ireland, Sir Basil Brooke. See Barton, B. Brookeborough: the Making of a Prime Minister Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast (1988) p.232.

30. Lee, Ireland p.301.

31. On the Northern Ireland Labour Party see Walker, G.S. The Politics of Frustration: Harry Midgley and the Failure of the Northern Ireland Labour Party Manchester, Manchester University Press (1985) and Harbinson, J.F. A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, 1891-1948 Belfast, Queen's University, M.Sc. (1972).

32. Walker, The Politics of Frustration p.34.

33. Buckland, The Factory of Grievances p.30.

34. Buckland, The Factory of Grievances pp.137-43.

35. On the sectarian tactics of the Unionists in the 1949 election and the violence and intimidation which took place during the campaign, see Farrell, Northern Ireland: The Orange State London, Pluto Press (1976) pp.186-7.

36. See Farrell, Arming the Protestants: the Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary and the Royal Ulster Constabulary 1920-27 Dingle, Brandon (1983) pp.287-8. Townshend notes, "Divided into 'A', 'B' and 'C' categories, the constabulary was in theory to be recruited throughout Ireland. In practice, it was a phenomenon of Ulster, where the part-time paid 'B' Specials were to give a particular stamp to the emerging Northern Ireland State"; Townshend, C. Political Violence in Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1983) p.341. For evidence of the leadership's uneasiness at the

militancy of the Specials in 1922, see Barton, Brookeborough pp.55-6. For uncritical accounts of the Specials see, Hezlet, Sir A. The 'B' Specials London, Pan Books (1973) and Clark, W. Guns in Ulster Belfast, Northern Whig (1967).

37. Between 1921 and 1922, approximately 44 000 Protestant men were recruited into the USC. See Palley, C. "The Evolution, Disintegration and Possible Reconstruction of the Northern Ireland Constitution" Anglo-American Law Review Vol. 1 (1972) pp.368-476, at p.399.

38. Townshend, Political Violence p.386.

39. Brewer, J. et al The Police, Public Order and the State London, Macmillan (1988) p.49.

40. On this point see the Cameron Report, Para. 145.

41. Brewer et al, The Police, Public Order and the State p.47 and p.50.

42. O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland p.17.

43. Hillyard, P. "Law and Order" in Darby, J. (ed.) Northern Ireland :The Background to the Conflict Belfast, Appletree Press (1983) pp.32-60, at p.35.

44. Rowthorn, B. and Wayne, N. Northern Ireland: the Political Economy of Conflict Cambridge, Polity Press (1988) pp.36-7. See also, Dickson, B. "Northern Ireland's Troubles and the Judges", in Hadfield, B. Northern Ireland: Politics and the Constitution, Open University Press, Buckingham (1992), pp.130-147, at p.131. Claire Palley notes that; "Active participation in politics is, however, an accepted preliminary in many countries to the path of judicial preferment. Only in the last thirty years in England has the judiciary largely been drawn from practitioners without political careers". Palley, "The Evolution" p.398. Professor Palley does not address the issue of whether an ethnically divided society like Northern Ireland is strictly comparable with Great Britain in this way.

45. Hillyard, Law and Order p.35.

46. O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland p.17.

47. Commentary upon the White Paper, (Cmnd.558) entitled 'A Record of Constructive Change' Belfast (1971). This document was published by prominent Catholics who had accepted nomination to the main statutory boards and bodies in Northern Ireland, and hence must be looked upon as 'moderates' prepared to 'work within the system'. It is quoted in Palley, "The Evolution" p.399.

48. Townshend, Political Violence p.385.

49. Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland), 1922, Section 2 (4).

50. Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, Section 1 (1)

51. Edwards, J. Ll. J. "Special Powers in Northern Ireland" Criminal Law Review 1956, pp.7-18, at p.10. Although

critical of the Act, Edwards retains noticeable sympathies for the Unionist point of view. For a more rigorous account and sharper criticism, see Palley, "The Evolution" pp.400-404. Professor Palley views the Act as 'arguably' ultra vires s.4(1) (3) of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and further challengeable on the grounds that it represents 'abdication' rather than 'delegation' on the part of the legislature.

52. On this point see Guelke, A. "Policing in Northern Ireland" in Hadfield, Northern Ireland pp.94-109, at p.96.

53. See for instance, O'Meara, D. Volkskapitalisme Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1983) pp.1-17.

54. But here too, Newell Stultz points to the changing nature of Nationalist rule, notably in the way Verwoerd concentrated policy-making at the expense of pressure groups. See, Stultz, N. "The Politics of Security" Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 7 (1) 1969, pp.3-20. In the same year, David Welsh noted the changing social composition of Afrikaner Nationalism: See Welsh, D. "Urbanisation and the Solidarity of Afrikaner Nationalism" Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 7 (2) 1969, pp. 265-76.

55. See Adam, H. and Giliomee, H. Ethnic Power Mobilised New Haven, Yale University Press (1979)

56. See Posel, D. "The Meaning of Apartheid Before 1948: Conflicting Interests and Forces Within the Afrikaner Nationalist Alliance" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 14 (1) October 1987, pp.122-139.

57. See for instance, "Appeal to the World Community" Document issued by the ANC during its National Consultative Conference Kabwe, Zambia (December 1985).

58. On this aspect of apartheid see, Dugard, J. Human Rights and the South African Legal Order Princeton, Princeton University Press (1978) p.53.

59. Lemon, A. Apartheid in Transition Aldershot, Gower (1987) pp.45-58.

60. Dugard, Human Rights pp.58-9.

61. De Klerk, W.A. The Puritans in Africa: a Story of Afrikanerdom London, Rex Collings (1975) p.241. Quoted in Lemon, Apartheid in Transition p.53.

62. Akenson quotes the saying that the only difference between the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) and the National Party was the day of the week. Akenson, God's Peoples p.304.

63. Gagiano's studies of Afrikaner political attitudes lead him to argue that they regard the state in directly possessive terms: "...by capturing power through their political embodiment, the National Party, in 1948, the Afrikaner community appropriated the state as their own...": Gagiano, J. "Regime Support in the Ruling Segment: A Study of Political Attitudes Among White University Students in South Africa" Paper presented to the Biennial Conference of

the Political Science Association of South Africa Port Alfred, 9-11 October 1989.

64. Stadler, A. The Political Economy of Modern South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987) p.65.

65. Stadler, The Political Economy p.76. See also, Schrire, R. "Bureaucracy and the Process of Reform" Journal of Contemporary African Studies Vol. 5 (1-2) pp.145-64, at p.154.

66. Stadler, The Political Economy p.77.

67. Cloete, J.J.N. "The Bureaucracy" in de Crespigny, A. and Schrire, R. The Government and Politics of South Africa Cape Town, Juta (1978) pp. 54-76, at p.55 and pp. 74-5.

68. On the duplication of bureaucracies under apartheid see, Savage, M. "Costs of Enforcing Apartheid and Problems of Change" African Affairs Vol. 76 (304) pp.287-302.

69. Stadler, The Political Economy p.77.

70. On the importance of demography -- specifically the numerical superiority of Afrikaans-speaking over English-speaking portions of the white electorate, see Trapido, S. "Political Institutions and Afrikaner Social Structures in the Republic of South Africa" American Political Science Review Vol. 57 (1) 1963, pp.75-87, at p.75. That flexible voter choice counted for little in South African elections after 1948 is suggested by the relatively high number of uncontested seats. See the accounts of individual elections in, Heard, K. General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970 Oxford, Oxford University Press (1974). See especially p.134, p.156, and p.192.

71. On the former, see Mathews, A.S. Law, Order and Liberty in South Africa Cape Town, Juta (1971); Mathews, A.S. Freedom, State Security and the Rule of Law: Dilemmas of the Apartheid Society Cape Town, Juta (1986); Dugard, J. Human Rights and the South African Legal Order; On the latter see, Sachs, A. "The Instruments of Domination in South Africa", in Thompson, L.M. and Butler, J. Change in Contemporary South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1975) pp. 223-249; Frankel, P. "South Africa: the Politics of Police Control" Comparative Politics Vol. 12 (1979-80) pp.481-499; Frankel, P. Pretoria's Praetorians Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1983); Brewer, J.D. et al, The Police, Public Order and the State; Brewer, J.D. "The Police in South African Politics" in, Johnson, S. (ed.), South Africa: No Turning Back London, Macmillan (1988) pp.258-282.

72. Sachs, "The Instruments of Domination" p.242, Table 9.4.

73. Sachs, "The Instruments of Domination" p.223.

74. Smith, M.G. "Some Problems With Minority Concepts and a Solution" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 10 (4) 1987 pp.341-362.

75. Sachs, "The Instruments of Domination" p.227.

76. Brewer, et al, The Police, Public Order p.163.

77. Frankel, The Politics of Police Control p.483.
78. Brewer, et al, The Police, Public Order and the State p.165
79. Sachs, "The Instruments of Domination" p.236,.
80. For details, see Mathews, Law, Order and Liberty pp.53-264; Dugard, Human Rights and the South African Legal Order pp.104-204 and pp.205-279.
81. See Mokgatle, D.D. "The Exclusion of Blacks from the South African Legal System" South African Journal on Human Rights Vol. 3 (1987) pp.44-51.
82. This view is illustrated (with varying degrees of confidence) in, Dean, W.H.B. "The Judiciary" in de Crespigny and Schrire, The Government and Politics of South Africa pp.32-53; Dugard, Human Rights..... pp.279-390; Corder, H. "Crowbars and Cobwebs: Executive Autocracy and the Law in South Africa" South African Journal on Human Rights Vol. 5 (1989) pp.1-25. Stephen Ellman argues that there is a human rights tradition in South African legal culture which, paradoxically, is nurtured by the elitist nature of the South African legal profession. See his, In a Time of Trouble: Law and Liberty in South Africa's State of Emergency Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1992).
83. Naomi Chazan defines irredentism as, "...any political effort to unite ethnically, historically or geographically related segments of a population in adjacent countries within a common political framework". Its commonest manifestation is a situation, "...in which a certain ethnic group is in a majority in the state making irredentist claims and a minority in the neighbouring country". Chazan, N. "Approaches to the study of Irredentism" in, Chazan, N. (ed.) Irredentism and International Politics Boulder, Lynne Rienner (1991) pp.1-2.
84. Adrian Guelke emphasises the role of Northern Ireland's "anomalous international status" in exacerbating the conflict and making it more intractable. See Guelke, A. (1) Northern Ireland: the International Perspective Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1988) and (2) "International Legitimacy, Self-determination and Northern Ireland" Review of International Studies Vol. 11 (1), 1985. pp.37-52.
85. Whyte, "How Much Discrimination" p.31. See also Wright, F. "The Ulster Spectrum" in Carlton, D. and Schaerf, C. Contemporary Terror: Studies in Sub-state Violence London, Macmillan (1981) pp.153-214, at p.175 and pp.180-87.
86. Northern Ireland has consistently been the least prosperous region of the United Kingdom, experiencing higher rates of unemployment and lower than average income than the rest of the country. Its main industries, shipbuilding, engineering and textiles have been among the most vulnerable in Britain's overall decline in the twentieth century. Government efforts to attract new industry to Northern Ireland had some success in the 1950s and 1960s but failed to solve the long term structural problems. See Simpson, J. "Economic Development: Cause and Effect in the Northern

Ireland Conflict" in Darby, Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict. See also Rowthorn and Wayne, Northern Ireland pp.70-84 and Buckland, The Factory of Grievances pp.52-59.

87. Trapido, "Political Institutions and Afrikaner Social Structures" p.75.

88. On the emergence of the National Party as the vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism, see Roberts, M. and Trollip, A.E.G. The South African Opposition Cape Town, Longmans (1947) especially pp.80-90; O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme pp.119-133 and 225-247; Stultz, N.M. The Nationalists in Opposition 1934-48 Cape Town, Human and Rousseau (1974), especially p.15.

89. On the Broederbond see, Serfontein, J.H.P. Brotherhood of Power London, Rex Collings (1979); Wilkins, I. and Strydom, H. The Super Afrikaners Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball (1978); Giliomee and Adam, Ethnic Power Mobilised; Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. From Apartheid to Nation-Building Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1989).

90. On the Orange Order see, Gray, T. The Orange Order London, The Bodley Head (1972); Roberts, D.A. "The Orange Order in Ireland: a Religious Institution?" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 22 (3) 1971, pp.269-282; Whyte, Interpreting Northern Ireland pp.30-32; Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party pp.90-91. On the Orange Order today, see Breen, S. "A Paler Shade of Orange?" Fortnight (286) July-August 1990, p.14.

91. On masonic influence in the Order, see Roberts, "The Orange Order in Ireland" pp.272-3.

92. Whyte (p.30) notes that Rose's (1971) figure of 90 000 for membership of the Order, based on survey data, probably remains valid, citing claims made by the Grand Secretary of the Order in 1977. This would make about 32% of Protestant males members of the Order. They are organised in 1500 lodges, controlled by a Grand Lodge which delegates executive power to a Central Committee of thirty, one third of whom are clergymen (Breen, "A Paler Shade"). Serfontein's (1977) figure of 11 910 members (p.135) makes it clear that a very much smaller proportion of Afrikaner adult males belong to the Broederbond, perhaps as few as 1%. This figure is very close to that of Wilkins and Strydom who estimate that the 7 500 names in their possession represented 60% of the membership in 1978. Serfontein breaks down the membership by occupation, revealing that the largest categories are in education, agriculture, pensioners and businessmen. More significant is the fact that the top echelon of each occupational group was well represented. Under 'education' for instance, the rectors of 24 universities and colleges appear. By contrast, Whyte points out of the Orange Order that, "...most observers have found that it is more popular among low-status Protestants than among high-status ones" (p.32). Recent discussions of the Order suggest that it has difficulty in attracting young people and is waning in influence among rising generations.

See Breen, "A Paler Shade" and Bell, D.(1) "Irish Contemporary Cultural Studies and the 'Problem' of Protestant Ideology" The Crane Bag Vol. 9 (2) 1985, pp.91-95, (2) "The Loyal Sons of Ulster March Anew" New Society 19.7.85, pp.79-81. (3) "Acts of Union: Youth Sub-Culture and Ethnic Identity Amongst Protestants in Northern Ireland" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 38 (2) 1987, pp.158-83.

93. Slabbert, F. van Zyl. "Afrikaner Nationalism, White Politics, Political Change" in Thompson, and Butler, Change in Contemporary South Africa pp.3-18, at p.8.

94. Slabbert, "Afrikaner Nationalism" p.9.

95. On Bates and Hungerford, see Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party Belfast, Blackstaff Press 1973 and Buckland, The Factory of Grievances. See also Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland.

96. By contrast with the elaboration of the state apparatus under nationalist rule (detailed above), in 1968 the Northern Ireland government comprised only seven departments. It is true however that as there were only fifty-two seats in the legislature, of which the unionists held thirty-five, "...in consequence a high proportion of the Unionist governing party held office of the Crown". Palley, "The Evolution" p.396.

97. O'Meara refers to the formation of thirty-one 'parties' between 1948 and the formation of the Herstigte Nasionale Party in 1969. Of these; "Seventeen were formed to foster the interests of white labour which 'were ignored in the NP'" (Volkskapitalisme p.265, note 9). But as Heard's detailed treatment of the elections during that period makes clear, there was no appreciable threat to the Nationalists from them. See for instance his discussions of the Conservative Workers' Party (General Elections pp.133-5, pp.139-40, pp.142-3, p.146 and p.156).

98. Whyte, "How Much Discrimination Was There?" p.29.

99. Mathews, Law, Order and Liberty p.230.

100. Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972 p.62. See also p.76 where the authors describe the 'populist' group of unionist ministers around Sir James Craig: "Broadly speaking, this group sought to generalise to the state as a whole the relationship between Protestant classes epitomised in the 'B' Specials".

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CRISES OF ULSTER UNIONISM AND AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

Elements of Regime Strength and the Defeat of Direct Armed Challenge

In both Northern Ireland and South Africa a number of factors combined to enable the states and regimes, which were charged with protecting and advancing the identities and material interests of Protestants and Afrikaners, to survive their lack of legitimacy.

Firstly, Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism were both movements which could mobilise diverse economic and social groups in the name of unity. Democracy, populism, a narrow but well-disseminated and strongly-rooted sense of identity and attention to material well-being through discrimination, were sources of this mobilising power. It has already been argued that none of these resources was unproblematic. Democracy and populism had limits well short of the rhetorical status accorded to them. Identities were not monolithic. According to circumstances, the experience of being a Protestant, a Unionist or a loyalist, a white person, a Nationalist or an Afrikaner, had different shades, intensities and dimensions of meaning. The role of discrimination was important in reproducing the alliances, but inevitably a subversive factor in the long-term problem of legitimacy. Nevertheless, these sources of unity were invaluable to Unionists and Nationalists in the tasks of

state building and defeating direct challenges to their dominance.

Secondly, both regimes were able to equip themselves with coercive laws and security forces sufficient to deal with these challenges. Once again, the security regimes were functional in the short run, but subversive of the longer-term goal of stability.

A third factor relates to the shortcomings of opposition forces. Among these were the difficulties of underground and exile conditions which had been forced on them and the dilemmas of the relationship between armed and peaceful political struggle. In both cases, opposition forces were unable to penetrate the regime's support base in order to exploit divisions on the basis of class. Neither could they persuasively substitute an inclusive nationhood for a narrow identity. The latter goal featured in the ideologies of the ANC and Irish Republicans, but in the face of Unionist and Nationalist cohesion, it was in neither case more than a rhetorical flourish.

Fourthly, both Unionists and Nationalists were able to maintain a favourable external environment -- or at least to minimise and cope with external threats. There were two ways in which Unionists enjoyed the best of both worlds in their external relationships until the early sixties. Firstly, in its relationship with Britain, Northern Ireland enjoyed access to the political and economic resources which made it viable as a separate entity. At the same time Unionist governments were granted a de facto autonomy from parliamentary scrutiny, which allowed derogations from British standards of democracy, administration and justice to be built into the working of the state. This confusion of dependence and autonomy was essential to the nature of

Unionist rule. Secondly, the rhetorical irredentism of the Irish Free State (and after 1949, the Republic) was a powerful incentive to Unionist unity, but the tacit admission of Irish governments that little could be done to make a united Ireland a practical reality meant that the security implications of the irredentist claims were not immediately pressing ones. Indeed Irish governments' willingness to use emergency powers¹ against the IRA when it used physical force to make good these very claims, meant that in the short term Unionism's unity and security needs were both serviced from this unlikely source.

In the case of South Africa, Britain's failure to intervene to frustrate Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 symbolised the limits of Western involvement (self-imposed or otherwise) in Southern Africa. Political and military withdrawal of imperial power left South Africa the dominant power in a region composed of black-ruled successor states, a diehard settler regime in Rhodesia, and the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola. Political and military withdrawal did not mean economic withdrawal however, and South Africa was able to enjoy, at least until the mid-1980s, the benefits of full Western investment and trading links without any serious infringement of its autonomy at home or in the region.

It was these resources which enabled Unionist and Nationalist governments to defeat armed campaigns, respectively by the IRA (1956-62)² and by the ANC and PAC from the early to the mid-1960s. In the short term at least both victories were politically and militarily quite conclusive, and the dissident movements were condemned to exile and marginalisation.³ It was not only the superior political and military resources of the ruling regimes that were decisive, but the armed campaigns in each instance were

divorced from mass political mobilisation, and were without strong enough roots in the communities they aspired to liberate.

In Northern Ireland, Catholic opposition politics were contained and confined by the demography of partition, the near total identification of Protestants with Unionism, and the exigencies of the Westminster electoral and parliamentary system. These conditions may have condemned Catholics to perpetual exclusion from political power, but they were not so onerous as to make armed struggle an immediately attractive proposition to any but a few zealots. The historical division between traditions of physical force and constitutional opposition also played a part in dividing anti-Unionist forces. The Nationalist Party in Northern Ireland, the lineal descendent of parliamentary opposition, was paralysed by the contradictions of constitutional opposition in a state it considered illegitimate. The outlook for armed struggle was not propitious. By the 1960s, a "belated modernisation of outlooks both north and south of the six-county border"⁴ suggested that support for violence on both sides of the community had greatly waned. The IRA's own lack of political sophistication and failure to appreciate the importance of mass support were central to the failure of the 1956-62 campaign to "re-open the Irish question".

The question could not be opened constitutionally because of the Ireland Act of 1949; since no movement existed to organise a campaign of civil disobedience and passive resistance in the North, the only other means was force.⁵

Townshend's scathing analysis of this reasoning lays bare the political bankruptcy which produced the 1956-62 campaign (which was labelled 'Operation Harvester').

This characteristically obtuse reasoning amounted to saying that since the IRA either could not be bothered or was not competent to create a mass movement, or since there was no prospect of mass support, Republicans could justifiably turn to violence.⁶

In South Africa, the conditions were very different, although the end result, the divorce of armed action from the mass support and political action which might have sustained it, was the same. In fact a mass movement had been created in opposition to apartheid between 1950 and 1960, in advance of the resort to armed action. Civil disobedience, protests, strikes and boycotts were all used by African political organisations in their struggle. It was only after the suppression of these peaceful forms of protest and the banning of the ANC and PAC in March 1960 that armed struggle was adopted by both.⁷ The ANC's Umkhonto We Sizwe was oriented towards sabotage, while the PAC's Poqo was insurrectionist in character. Aside from the state's formidable strengths, Umkhonto We Sizwe's campaign was defeated by the inadequacies of its own security procedures, and its failure to situate its activities in a context of popular support and participation. On this latter point Lodge cites the organisational self-criticism of two participants, Joe Slovo and Ben Turok, adding his own assessment;

Whereas it is rather doubtful that an insurgent movement under South African conditions could afford to be anything other than elitist, it is quite true that outside the membership of the SACP no systematic provision was made for popular mobilisation in a support role.⁸

Poqo had a wider membership than Umkhonto (making it even more susceptible to state penetration), but its millenarian

and insurrectionist tendencies, and its main support base among the most underprivileged migrants in the African population of the Western Cape meant that it was not capable of a sustained, controlled, well-organised campaign and it was broken up as an effective force by mid-1963.

The formidable political and coercive strengths of the Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist regimes were displayed in the ways in which opposition to them was forced onto the unpromising and unprofitable terrain of armed struggle divorced from mass support and involvement. In both cases the speed with which opposition forces regrouped to pose a more serious threat would be surprising, were it not for both regimes' basic lack of legitimacy and the vulnerability to social, economic and political change of the Unionists' and Nationalists' principal political assets.

Change and the Development of Political Crisis

The elements of regime strength which enabled Unionist and Nationalist governments to defeat insurgency were themselves subject to erosion by political, economic and social change. The effect of this erosion was to cause renewed and re-stated political crises which led in both Northern Ireland and South Africa to the break up of ruling coalitions.

The first source of erosion was the conflict between economic imperatives and discriminatory structures and practices. For Unionists the underlying imperative was to halt decline and for Nationalists it was to sustain growth. The policy changes needed to achieve these objectives were unlikely to leave intact the relationships which excluded subordinate groups and ensured unity in the ruling coalitions.

Secondly, new forms of resistance on the part of these subordinate groups enabled blacks and Catholics to restate the basic legitimacy crises of the regimes in very pressing terms. In both cases, the resistance led to violence, although in neither case were the movements intrinsically violent. In both cases the main beneficiaries of renewed resistance were the bearers of armed struggle. Both the IRA and the ANC were rescued from the consequences of their earlier defeat and marginalisation by the violence which followed peaceful protest.

Thirdly, both governments faced a deteriorating external environment, which amounted to increased pressure from outside, effectively ruling out coercion without reform. It is true, however, that in this, as in the other dimensions of crisis, there were important differences of emphasis. The Northern Ireland government's autonomy was conditional, and its dependence very marked. Although it was fully independent, the South African government faced a much more determined and broadly based assault on its legitimacy in the international community, and needed a reform programme to ward off damaging sanctions.

In each case, these three factors ensured that the governments were forced to occupy rapidly diminishing political space between their own supporters and the previously excluded groups who had to be incorporated or appeased, and where necessary, repressed. Broadening the base of legitimacy had as its objective for both, the preservation, not the transformation of the system. The preservation respectively of white rule and the union with Great Britain were the imperatives of reform Nationalism and reform Unionism. This inevitably left little room for manoeuvre either to left or right. The need not to surrender severely limited what could be offered. In the other

direction, the need not to be overwhelmed by reaction, again curtailed freedom of action. Within their own restricted contexts, both governments were answerable to electorates, which meant that they had to reform, extend democracy and still reproduce their support bases. Bew et al (discussing the 1969 reforms in Northern Ireland) catch the dilemma neatly and in terms strongly suggesting both parallels and contrasts with the situation of Nationalist governments from the late seventies onwards.

The introduction of the reforms inevitably divided the Unionist party at all levels, yet it was this party, or at least the 'moderate' section of it which was also charged with ruling the north. Whilst a modernising and reforming Unionist party bereft of state power was a possibility, a Unionist regime with the double responsibility of reforming and reproducing mass support was not.⁹

To make matters worse, by the time reform programmes were under way, this lack of political space was cruelly emphasised for both governments by the accompanying presence of revitalised armed struggle.

These elements produced a configuration of choice in both Northern Ireland and South Africa between sectarian or racist 'democracy' on the one hand, and on the other, the politics of modernisation and secularisation brought about by managerial reform from above. Central to the ideas of reform Nationalism and reform Unionism then, was a tendency to play down the politics of identity and mythology. Yet these could not be abandoned altogether without fatally undermining the essential natures of the states in question. In any case, both were aimed at preservation rather than transformation, and argued that identity and self-determination would actually be protected and guaranteed by concession and adaptation.

Rather than abandoning these things altogether, reformers argued instead that the communities which embodied them were no longer self-sufficient, that the claims to justice of others had to be taken into account and that a combination of sociological and demographic odds with outside pressures made accommodation the way of self-interest. For both, secularisation meant increasingly introducing experts and bureaucrats into policy-making, and their language into political discourse.¹⁰ It also meant more personal policy-making.

THE CRISIS OF ULSTER UNIONISM

The crisis of Ulster Unionism was precipitated by the campaign of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1968-69, and the reaction to it of the Northern Ireland government and Protestant extremists. The three-way conflict erupted into serious communal violence in August 1969, which forced British political and military intervention. Between 1969 and 1972, three Unionist prime ministers, Terence O'Neill (1963-69), James Chichester-Clarke (May 1969-March 1971), and Brian Faulkner (March 1971-March 1972), tried to carry out British-sponsored programmes of reform while still reproducing the conditions of Unionist rule, the latter two in the context of a determined and extensive armed campaign by the IRA. The consequent fragmentation of Unionism into several political parties and paramilitary and workers' groups accelerated after the imposition of direct rule from London in March 1972. When Faulkner led a reforming rump of Unionists in the attempt to operate a power-sharing scheme of government which had been agreed between the British and Irish governments and the principal Unionist and Nationalist political parties in Northern Ireland, direct action by

loyalist workers and paramilitaries in the Ulster Workers' Council Strike (May 1974) brought his government down.

Since 1974, Protestant political aspirations have continued to take several forms, expressing class-based resentments, paramilitary resistance, militant sectarianism and religious fundamentalism. 'British' and 'Ulster' identities continue to find adherents, offering a rough and ready way of distinguishing Unionists from loyalists. Some of the former favour full integration into the United Kingdom, others, devolved institutions on the pattern of 1920-72. Among the latter, are proponents of full independence. Despite their divisions, the various Unionist successor groups have generally been able to prevent far-reaching political change which they regard as unfavourable to them (the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 is a notable exception). They have been unable, however, to negotiate or impose a settlement on terms favourable to themselves. An important feature of the crisis of Unionism has been the impact on the wider political crisis of direct action by popular, extra-parliamentary Protestant forces. In cases of the attacks on Catholic areas of Belfast by Protestants in August 1969 and the UWC strike in 1974 such actions proved to be significant turning-points. The threat or reality of such action has been a permanent structural feature of the Northern Ireland conflict at all other times.

The Origins of the Crisis (1) Economic Factors

There is substantial agreement on the nature of the economic conditions which helped create the context of Unionism's crisis, although the principal accounts interpret their political effects and the dynamics of change in different ways.¹¹ There is also consensus on the timing. Although Northern Ireland's economic problems were manifest from the

beginning of Unionist rule in 1921, it was not until the mid-1950s that they became the subject of the sustained government attention and action which, along with other factors, was to have profound political effects.

Northern Ireland was (and remains) a peripheral and vulnerable economy, a region of the wider British economy. An essential aspect of this condition was that the local policy-makers who held office between 1920 and 1972) had no substantial powers of initiative. Northern Ireland has consistently been the poorest region in the United Kingdom, with higher rates of unemployment than even the other depressed regions. In the inter-war period, social deprivation in Northern Ireland was particularly sharp:

..A survey of the Belfast working class in 1938-9 revealed that thirty-six per cent of those investigated were unable to afford sufficient food, clothing or fuel to maintain health or working capacity.¹²

Although the application of Britain's post-1945 welfare legislation to Northern Ireland closed the gap somewhat, on all important indices economic and social conditions in the region lagged behind those in the rest of Britain.

Northern Ireland's economy under Unionist rule had a substantial agricultural sector. In the 1950s, one worker in six was employed in agriculture, and 25% of males. Manufacturing industry was concentrated in textiles and in shipbuilding and engineering. Textiles and shipbuilding were two of the most vulnerable industries to the long-term decline of the British economy in general and foreign competition in particular. As a result, redundancies and closures forced up the unemployment figures in Northern Ireland from the late fifties onwards. Economic decline

prompted intervention from the Northern Ireland and British governments to assist industry and create employment. The two key aspects of this were an increased reliance on centralised economic planning and the encouragement of foreign investment leading to "...the arrival of companies which owed no particular allegiance to the Unionist Party or to Protestantism".¹³ According to Probert, these policies helped undermine the hegemony of local capital (the 'Ulster bourgeoisie'), which had already been eroded by economic decline, and with it, "...an important part of the Unionist system of distributing patronage in the shape of jobs".¹⁴ At the same time, the arrival of multinationals created;

...a new middle class sector whose incomes and status were not related to the old Unionist oligarchy. Managers and technicians were hired by the huge parent companies, who had little concern for the peculiarities of Northern Ireland's political system, but rather placed great value on rationalisation and efficiency in the allocation of resources within the province.¹⁵

According to Probert, the principal political effect of the priority given to tackling Northern Ireland's economic problems through planning and the importation of capital was that:

At the central government level, at least, the traditional preoccupation with loyalist unity and the constitutional issue seemed to have been superseded by an active concern with setting up 'development' programmes".¹⁶

Bew et al interpret the response to Northern Ireland's economic problems rather differently, and emphasise other political priorities and results. Far from the problem of unity being superseded, for these authors it was the main incentive for the pursuit of modernising economic policies.

The key issue was the loss of working class Protestant support to the NILP in the 1958 and 1962 Stormont elections. In 1958, four Unionist-held seats in Belfast went to Labour and while in 1962 no further seats were lost, Labour increased its percentage vote significantly.

Bew et al argue that the decline of the 'traditional bourgeoisie' and the influence of the 'new bourgeoisie' based respectively on established Ulster business interests, and on incoming multinationals, should not be exaggerated. Long-standing ties between textile interests and the Unionist Party continued to be important, and the new concerns were not notably energetic in combating the structures of discrimination in employment. In this account, the state is the 'mouthpiece' neither of the traditional nor of the modernising 'fraction' of capital. It retains a wide measure of autonomy in pursuing its central task, that of reconstructing dominance over the Protestant working class. This is the relationship which above all is crucial for the survival of the state. O'Neill's economic policies achieved this goal,¹⁷ but at the expense of antagonising sections of the Unionist Party. Local business interests resented the promotion of incoming capital. Unionists in the west of the province (like their Catholic counterparts) resented the concentration of new infrastructural projects in the east, the Protestant heartland where competition from the NILP was strongest. To make matters worse, there was widespread unhappiness at, "...the centralisation of initiative at Stormont within a relatively small group of ministers and civil servants. This led to charges of ministerial and bureaucratic dictatorship from local Unionists".¹⁸

All accounts agree then, that economic decline and policies of modernisation provided the context for the crisis of Unionism, interacting with other factors to force divisions

within Unionism beyond the point at which they could (as in the past) be contained. All are agreed that the balance of social and economic forces which enabled the Unionist alliance to reproduce itself and to maintain its domination over the Catholic minority was threatened by the contraction of staple industries, rising unemployment among Protestant workers, the arrival of foreign capital in the shape of multinationals, and the combination of rational bureaucratic planning with dependence on increased subsidies from the British government. It is worth re-emphasising, however, the differences of nuance in interpretations of cause and effect, and in the relationships between economics and politics. The most important differences revolve around the question of specifying the relative importance of social forces in the crisis. Where Probert and to a lesser degree, Farrell, emphasise the role of the multinationals and the 'new' middle-class, both Catholic and Protestant. Bew et al insist that, "The determinant social force in the crisis was the working class, in particular that section of the Belfast Protestant working class which voted NILP".¹⁹ The state, in its role as co-ordinator of the Unionist alliance, was the other crucial actor. These differences of emphasis will assume importance when the question of the break up of the alliance is confronted directly, and the crisis compared with that of Nationalism in South Africa.

The Origins of the Crisis (2) The Reconstitution of Catholic Opposition

Up to the mid-1960s, Catholic opposition to Unionist rule in Northern Ireland was for the most part, "...the preserve either of gunmen on the one hand, or of the pubocracy and the shopocracy topped up by the clergy, drawn broadly from the same background on the other".²⁰ As far as 'the gunmen' were concerned, the border campaign of 1956-62 made plain

the IRA's political confusion and decline into "autolectic violence",²¹ and internment both north and south of the border seemed to show how far removed armed struggle was from the realities of contemporary Ireland. As a result, the leadership came to believe that the IRA and the broader Republican movement should equip themselves for involvement in popular struggles on social and economic issues.²² Armed action was de-emphasised, and the theory (in particular) and practice of Republicanism began to echo 'progressive' and even Marxist categories of analysis. Although these shifts were in tune with the modernising temper of the times, and there was even a tradition of 'social republicanism' to legitimise them, as Patterson points out;

..the core ideas of republican re-thinking were deeply dependent on the pre-given categories of nationalist thought. The most striking characteristic of the thinking of the period is its capacity to deny the significance of certain massive realities which a 'Marxism' less influenced by nationalism would have paused to reflect on.²³

In any case, such recruits as came to the IRA even after the failure of the border campaign were attracted by the prospects of military training and action, so the movement continued to carry a heavy traditional freight. This divided personality meant that the IRA was poised to play a role both in the modernised and apparently secularised conflicts which developed around the civil rights movement, and the relapse into atavistic militarism which followed the communal conflicts sparked by the civil rights campaign.

The terms 'pubocracy' and 'shopocracy' succinctly describe the main constituency of the Nationalist Party in Northern Ireland.²⁴ Typically for a community excluded from political

power and 'the establishment', the Catholic middle class in both its entrepreneurial and professional manifestations, was a service class to its own community. It was from these narrow ranks that the leadership of the Nationalist Party came. Early in the century, close connections with the clergy and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), a Catholic organisation bearing a close resemblance to the Orange Order, tainted the Nationalists with Catholic sectarianism. While the worst of such influence had long been dispelled, strong clerical and AOH influence remained right down to the 1960s.²⁵ Socially conservative²⁶ largely rural,²⁷ paralysed by the contradictions of constitutional opposition in a state whose legitimacy they rejected and doomed to ineffectiveness by demography, the Nationalists faced two key challenges as the pace of politics quickened in the 1960s.²⁸

The first involved how to respond to O'Neill's 'bridge-building' gestures, which without conceding anything substantial (in the way of Catholic appointments to statutory boards for instance), seemed to signal a willingness to recognise Catholics as something more than 'second-class citizens'. The second challenge was posed by the appearance of activist groups in the Catholic community, disillusioned with the Nationalists' lack of policy, organisation and intra-party democracy. The focus for their activism was social and economic reform rather than a rehearsal of the grievance of partition. In trying to meet these challenges, the Nationalist Party accepted the role of official opposition in the Stormont Parliament in 1965, held its first annual conference in 1966 (an eloquent enough fact on its own) and in general tried to acquire policy positions on a wide range of issues. Despite these efforts, the basically anachronistic nature of the party placed it beyond the reach of piecemeal reform, and from 1970, it was

superseded by the Social Democratic and Labour Party which united the various strains of Catholic constitutional politics from nationalism and civil rights through to labourism.

The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement

The contradictions and failures of traditional Catholic politics, leading to reconstructions of physical force republicanism and constitutional nationalism which were only partially successful, form the background for the emergence of the civil rights movement, the truly novel element and principal catalyst in Northern Ireland's crisis of modernisation and the Unionist coalition's dissolution. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was formed in 1967. The aims of this umbrella organisation were to highlight, resist, and redress cases of discrimination, especially in housing and employment.²⁹ It contained elements whose purpose was reform within the context of maintaining the union with Britain.³⁰ Others wished to use specific grievances for the purposes of traditional republicanism,³¹ and some aspired to transcend the national question by attracting the Protestant working class into broadly-based class politics.³²

The view that the civil rights movement represented something new in Northern Ireland's politics rests on three grounds. The first is that it emerged from a growing Catholic middle class, fostered by the extension of Britain's post-1945 welfare provisions to Northern Ireland, especially in secondary and tertiary education. The influx of new industry to the province also encouraged this group to have higher expectations of upward mobility in employment. The second is that the campaign altered the ground of opposition by focussing on social and economic

reform rather than sectarian politics and the national question. The third is that the twin futilities of armed struggle and parliamentary opposition in a demographically loaded assembly, were rejected for tactics of peaceful demonstration and civil disobedience borrowed from the experience of the American South.

The thesis that the civil rights movement represented the emergence of a new Catholic middle class was put forward by the report of the Cameron Commission³³ and repeated by later accounts.³⁴ It has since been challenged³⁵ and defended.³⁶ The debate is a useful one, because fundamental to the analysis of any political movement is investigation of its social base. But class categories are not always sensitively used. For instance, the People's Democracy leaders are often described as 'middle class' and the label used, directly or indirectly to explain some or other aspect of the movement's ideology or strategy.³⁷ In fact as students, these people enjoyed financial independence through a small state-funded allowance, complete freedom from the discipline of productive work and the prospect of a secure occupational and financial future. These were often combined with a working class background. To label this cocktail of social attributes 'middle class' is not particularly helpful.

In fact, the central emphasis should be, not how 'middle class', but how 'new' and how 'Catholic' were the forces gathered up and released by the civil rights movement. These questions can be addressed by considering the claim that the grounds of opposition were shifted to social and economic issues. Hewitt's assertion³⁸ that the civil rights campaign was merely the restatement of nationalist objectives by other means has been damaged by charges that he underestimates the extent of discrimination under the Stormont regime, and hence the nature and extent of

Catholics' grievances. Patterson's conclusions on the influence of traditional nationalism have been noted above³⁹ but his account suggests less a conspiracy of camouflage, than genuine ideological confusion. Austin Curry⁴⁰ claims from a participant's perspective that:

The thousands who marched for 'one man, one vote' and a fair allocation of houses and an end to discrimination in jobs actually did so for those reasons and in the great majority of cases the feeling of injustice arose from personal or family experience.

But he adds: "...Many were sufficiently politically aware to realise that the slogan 'If we are British citizens we demand the same rights as other British citizens' was not quite as simple as it sounds". Eamonn McCann, in his activist's memoir of the civil rights period in Derry, exemplifies the aspiration to secular class conflict and a rejection of traditional nationalism.⁴¹ But the same author, writing in 1969, frankly acknowledges the contradictions in the civil rights movement.

It is perfectly obvious that people still do see themselves as Catholics and Protestants, and the cry 'get the Protestants' is still very much on the lips of the Catholic working class. Everyone applauds loudly when one says in a speech that we are not sectarian, we are fighting for the rights of all Irish workers, but really that's because they see this as the new way of getting at the Protestants.⁴²

What Currie signals obliquely and McCann states more directly is that there were strains and tensions within the civil rights movement. Tendencies which favoured pan-Catholic unity (in a broadened and more radical form of the Nationalist Party's constituency), or secularised class politics, or piecemeal reform within the continuing context of British rule, jostled with each other over the movement's

tactics and direction. And as Patterson points out, the republican movement, only incompletely weaned from armed struggle and partially reoriented from irredentist to progressive priorities, also took part.

As a result, although both in the social composition of its support and in the nature of its demands, the civil rights movement represented significant change from the Catholic politics of the past, it is by no means clear that within its own ranks, or in the anxious eyes of Unionists, it represented a decisive break with the past. The tensions between old and new were further highlighted by the movement's choice of tactical weapon, the protest march.

This tactic was intended to inspire solidarity and activism and to capture the sympathy of the outside world, imitating the American civil rights movement in an increasingly telegenic age. This characteristically modern inspiration could not be transferred to Northern Ireland without side-effects however. As Bew et al put it;

In Ulster demonstrations had distinctly non-secular implications. Marches in particular meant, and still mean, the assertion of territorial sectarian claims. To march in or through an area is to lay claim to it. When so many districts are invested with confessional significance by one bloc or another, undertaking a 'secular' march creates the conditions for territorial transgressions and counter-transgressions.⁴³

The wider political crisis which developed around the campaign of the civil rights movement was largely played out through the issue of marches. There were three principal dimensions to this issue. The first was the question of the authorities' response, which included banning individual marches, the passing of fresh public order legislation and,

crucially, the conduct of the police force. The second involved struggle within the civil rights movement between those who favoured limited, peaceful protest and an early end (or at least moratorium) to marches when reformist gains had been made and those who were determined on confrontation to expose the contradictions in the system and to bring it down altogether. The third dimension was the development of extremist Protestant resistance to the civil rights movement, inspired and led by the Rev. Ian Paisley, which concentrated on organising counter-demonstrations, pre-emptively occupying public space, and directly attacking marchers.

These three dimensions were of course closely integrated in a chain reaction of escalating conflict. Protestant extremists put pressure on the government to deal repressively with the civil rights movement. By their obvious connections with the police and 'B' Specials they made plain the sectarian nature of the regime. Their hostile reaction completely contradicted the secular rhetoric of the civil rights movement, encouraging those on both sides of the community divide who preferred to see it as a vehicle for Catholic and nationalist aspirations.

All three of these effects were evident in the case of the People's Democracy march to Derry in January 1969. The attack on this march by Protestant extremists (many of whom were members of the 'B' Specials) with the connivance of the police who were supposed to protect the marchers, was a significant turning-point in exposing the deep sectarian divisions behind the modernised facade of the civil rights campaign.⁴⁴

It is ironic, then, that the most 'modern' and secular aspect of the civil rights movement should also be the most

atavistic and the one most likely to incite sectarian passions. The tactic of the protest march in a situation where it had strong atavistic associations is indicative of the limits of modernisation in the Northern Ireland conflict.

The reconstitution of Catholic opposition which took place under the aegis of the civil rights movement involved a revitalised constitutional nationalism, a partly transformed physical-force republicanism and an admixture of left-wing radicalism in tune with the student activism of the late sixties. It reflected an accessible form of participatory opposition untainted by the sterility of electoral minority opposition in a divided society, or the futility of armed struggle divorced from popular support. Its subversive challenge to the regime was based not on action directly aimed at its overthrow, but on an invitation for it to live up to the logic of its own ('British') standards. Any attempt to do this, as the more perceptive of the civil rights leaders knew well, would be likely seriously to destabilise the Unionists' own constituency. The characteristic of the civil rights campaign that caused crisis and division in the ranks of the Unionists was its composition of modernised, partly-transformed and unreconstructed elements. The nature of the movement itself and the circumstances in which it operated, were such that a reformist response from the Unionists was inevitable. But equally inevitable was a powerful backlash to reformism

The Origins of the Crisis (3) The Deterioration of the Unionists' External Environment

Given the ambiguities of Northern Ireland's political status, it is scarcely surprising that external factors loom large in the Northern Ireland conflict. The ability of

Unionists to reproduce a bloc of support cohesive enough to maintain the state depended partly on enjoying enough autonomy from British 'interference' to allow the continuance of its populist and discriminatory features. Anything which threatened this autonomy threatened the foundations of the Unionist coalition.

Between 1922 and 1972, Northern Ireland's constitutional status was, at least in theory, unambiguous. Article 75 of the Government of Ireland Act⁴⁵ clearly established the superior jurisdiction of the Westminster parliament and the conditional nature of the Northern Ireland government's powers. But in practice, the convention that Northern Ireland matters were not discussed at Westminster (despite the fact that Northern Ireland constituencies sent twelve members there) clouded the issue. So too did matters of status, like the attendance of Northern Ireland delegations at Imperial and Commonwealth conferences.⁴⁶ Even Northern Ireland's economic relationship with Britain was less like that of a depressed region in a national economy, than of a distant neo-colonial dependency to its metropole. Buckland notes that;

..imperial and local perspectives were often at variance with the regional perspective, and thus severely restricted the Northern Ireland government's will and capacity for developing satisfactory regional policies.⁴⁷

Indeed, writing of Northern Ireland's first prime minister, he concludes, "Craig at times acted less as Northern Ireland's prime minister than its ambassador to Britain".⁴⁸

This providential ambiguity and de facto autonomy rested on wider considerations than the direct relationships between the Unionist Party and British governments. Undoubtedly, the

Unionists' freedom of action derived in part from its embattled status. As long as Northern Ireland was the focus of irredentist rhetoric from Irish governments and the Catholic opposition in Northern Ireland, and as long as armed struggle continued to pose a threat to order and stability in the province, it could hardly be treated as nothing more than another region of the British Isles. As argued above, the failure of the IRA's insurgent campaign and the rise of the civil rights movement drastically altered the configuration of Catholic opposition. One of the effects of this was to make more feasible the airing of Catholic grievances in the context of British party politics. A bridgehead of sorts already existed for this purpose in the 'Friends of Ireland' group of Labour MPs which was founded during the Labour administration of 1945-50.⁴⁹ This support base was expanded in 1965 with the founding of the 'Campaign for Democracy in Ulster', whose inaugural meeting was attended by sixty Labour MPs. The return of the Labour Party to office in 1964 gave confidence to the civil rights movement and threatened to alter the traditional quiescence of British government policy.⁵⁰ This threat provided ammunition both for reform Unionists and their reactionary counterparts.

In some respects the key to the changing nature of the Unionists' external environment lay with the Irish Republic, where a process of modernisation parallel to that associated with O'Neill in Northern Ireland was under way. Indeed the breadth and the depth of this process were considerably more extensive in the south than in the north of Ireland, largely because the former had a considerably greater way to go in that direction. Modernisation is generally accepted to have been inaugurated as a conscious and consistent policy with the replacement of De Valera as Taoiseach (prime minister) and leader of the ruling Fianna Fail Party in 1959, although

as with all historical movements, its roots are more varied and stretch further back.⁵¹ The adoption of Keynesianism, economic planning by bureaucrats and experts and the attraction of foreign investment, were the key economic instruments of modernisation. The Republic moved towards free trade with Britain in 1960 and 1965. The pieties of traditional republicanism could no longer be sustained as official policy in the light of this démarche, and the Irish government's attitude to Northern Ireland became more and more explicitly that re-unification could only come about through consent.

Leaving behind the persona, associated with De Valera, of a pious, autarchic and Gaelic republic, sundered and martyred by British imperialism, Irish policy-makers began skillfully to purvey the image of a go-ahead, modern state, its economy open to the world and eager to compete in it. This re-launched version would be fit to take its place in the context of European integration and on a wider world stage, forsaking the pedantic and narrow neutrality which kept it out of the Second World War, for something more active, along the lines of Third World non-alignment.

Modernisation had its limits of course, and as Foster points out, the Republic's political structure, "remained closely connected to the cultural and social norms of Irish rural society".⁵² But at the same time as Lemass could argue⁵³ that Protestants would be happy to take their place in the Irish nation if the Republic could sustain enough economic growth to equalise material conditions with Northern Ireland, O'Neill could proclaim that if Roman Catholics had decent jobs and homes, they would be as loyal as Protestants.⁵⁴ Even more disturbing to Unionists than these optimistic (and contradictory) materialist projections, was the possibility that Northern Ireland might become an

archaic inconvenience to businesslike relations between Ireland and Britain as both moved towards entry into the European Community. The decline of Northern Ireland's basic industries and the failure of the Republic to establish an independent national economy reflected in each case an inability to survive in the face of foreign competition. Both parts of Ireland were thrown back on their links with Britain. Northern Ireland became more dependent on state intervention and direct subsidies, the Republic abandoned protectionism and was reintegrated into the British market. As Probert puts it;

The foundations of partition in the historic development of two different modes of production in Ireland were being steadily undermined, together with the basis of ruling class sectarianism in Ulster.⁵⁵

In several ways, then, the favourable external circumstances which sustained Ulster Unionism were subject to erosion in the 1960s. At a time when Northern Ireland's dependence on subsidies from the British exchequer increased, the British government and parliament could be expected to take a more critical view of the Unionist regime. The civil rights movement represented in many influential British eyes the kind of reformist, modernising force which could propel Northern Ireland in the direction of British standards of administration. The Dublin government's firm hand in dealing with the IRA between 1956 and 1962 and Lemass's programme of modernisation, seemed to remove the external threat on which uncritical British support was partly premised. These altered circumstances were influential in the development of reform Unionism and the reaction to it, which constituted the crisis of Unionism in the late sixties.

THE CRISIS OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

The notion of crisis is virtually omnipresent in the literature on contemporary South African politics.⁵⁶ This ubiquity, and the flexibility with which the concept has been used, leave it open to a measure of interpretative discussion and critique. For instance, there is the problem of chronology and the identification of a 'crisis'; is there a threshold beyond which a series of interrelated dysfunctional trends becomes a crisis? How do we conceptualise a situation in which dysfunctional contradictions are endemic both in periods of unrest and stability?⁵⁷

There is also the question of the relationship between economic and political dimensions of crisis. How closely can manifestations of political crisis (electoral volatility, party splits, states of emergency, political violence) be related to structural change in society and the economy? How simple and direct are the causal links between the two? Do we risk, in using the idea of 'crisis,' imposing a spurious order on situations fraught with the irrational and contingent?

Clarity is also desirable on the exact locus of whatever crisis we are talking about. In the context of South Africa from the mid-1970s, for instance, the formulae, 'crisis of the state', 'crisis of white supremacy', 'crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism' are all intelligible and offer useful perspectives on basically the same terrain. But they are not the same and different perceptions of crisis have seemed to present different and sometimes contradictory imperatives. For instance, measures intended to alleviate or resolve a general crisis of white supremacy have tended to sharpen and deepen the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism.

It will be useful to bear these points in mind while discussing the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism and its bearing on the dissolution of the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance.

Passages of stress frequently attended Nationalist rule between 1948 and the mid-1960s. These included the struggle over the amendment of the constitution removing coloured voters from the common roll, the gathering of black resistance to the imposition of apartheid, culminating in the Defiance Campaign, Sharpeville, and the banning of the ANC and PAC. The inexorable build-up of international concern was a reaction to these events and an additional source of stress in itself. These stressful periods encompassed secular trends which would accelerate from the 1970s, like international action against apartheid, and currents which, like black resistance, would go underground and re-emerge in altered and more potent forms from 1973 onwards.

There was an important difference however between the stressful conditions of the period 1948-1965, and the full-blown crisis which made its presence felt in Afrikaner Nationalism from the mid-1970s onwards. Before then, the conflictual elements were external to the Nationalist coalition and the conflicts were functional, perhaps essential, to its ethnic mobilisation and unity. The sources of stress did not combine and react with internal fault lines to threaten the integrity of the alliance, as they later did. This does not mean that Afrikaner Nationalism was a monolith. Differences of emphasis and principle were there, but the different tendencies were kept together by various factors. These included the perceived hostility to Afrikaner Nationalism of outside forces, including English

imperialism, African nationalism and international opinion; the interlocking web of organisations which assiduously cultivated ideology, promoted careers, and censored thought and action beyond 'acceptable' limits; the force of Verwoerd's personality and to some extent the legacy of his authority even after his death; the identification of the party with movement, action, change, large tasks and ambitious blueprints.

These characteristics enabled the National Party to shrug off the departure of disaffected right-wing members to found the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) in 1969. This prologue to the deeper divisions which would emerge later, was prompted by minor alterations in direction by the Vorster government, especially in establishing diplomatic relations with newly-independent African states, and allowing Maori players to tour with the New Zealand All Blacks. Personality clashes and cultural issues also played a part, but Stadler points to a structural issue of longer term importance. This was a 'new populism' generated among lower-class Afrikaners, disgruntled and threatened by the rise of an affluent elite propelled upwards by the Nationalists' use of the state as the vehicle of ethnic advance.⁵⁸

It was to be over a decade before there was a more serious split, the breakaway of Dr. Treurnicht and 18 Nationalist MPs to form the Conservative Party in 1982. It was a decade in which the structural economic problems and reconstituted black resistance, which made themselves felt from 1973 onwards, prompted a strategic response from the Nationalist government which combined both reform and intensified repression. The central elements of this strategy were; the centralising of policy-making in the executive with greatly increased roles for the bureaucracy and the military, at the expense of parliament and the party; broadening the basis of

support for the state by cultivating English-speaking whites and big business, co-opting Indians and coloureds through the tricameral constitutional system, and attempting to create a black middle class through the homelands, the black local authorities systems, and easing controls on black economic advance; downplaying the cultural and ideological pieties of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation, and replacing them with an all-embracing ideology ('total onslaught/total strategy') which purported to be completely neutral in ethnic terms.

This strategy was based on internally contradictory premises. The party leadership accepted that the partition of the country into spurious nation states could not provide the legitimacy and stability on which white interests depended, but refused to contemplate a future in which racial categories would not determine political rights and the composition of political structures. The second premise was that some discriminatory structures which were essential to white interests would have to remain, and those that were not could be abolished. This committed the government to large scale repression in defence of discrimination.

Government policies caused alienation and disaffection among the activist, populist and culturally militant sections of the Nationalist alliance. The relative decline of these elements in the National Party helped keep this disaffection in check. The contradictory premises on which reform was based also helped keep the party together. Policies were made and implemented in an elaborate shuffling ritual, forwards, sideways and backwards. Much of the time too, they were explicated in clouds of ambiguous rhetoric which obscured their immediate effects and ultimate purposes from white voters, and in all likelihood from the policy-makers themselves. These obfuscations meant that not only could the

disaffection of the Afrikaner right wing be contained within the party until the split of 1982, but even after that, the revolt could be kept very largely within constitutional limits, so that for ten years (1982-1992) the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism was played out in a competition for the allegiance of the white (and especially Afrikaans-speaking) electorate. This electoral struggle was complemented by competition for control of the social, religious and cultural organisations which provided Afrikaner Nationalism's infrastructural network. During the eighties, however, the fragmentation of the Nationalist alliance was emphasised by the growth of numerous paramilitary bodies (notably the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, the AWB), and political groupings whose standpoint reflected radical partition and a much smaller white homeland, rather than the Conservative Party's claim to the whole territory of current 'white' South Africa.

President de Klerk's unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the South African Communist Party in February 1990, presented the Afrikaner right with a moment of truth. The choice was whether to continue to oppose the government primarily by constitutional means, or to resort primarily to extra-parliamentary direct action in political, industrial and paramilitary forms. The former option was the one which prevailed, and even after the crushing defeat for the right in the whites-only referendum of March 1992, no popular, mass direct action has taken place. Instead, a third theatre of operations appears to have been activated, a core of resistance from within state organs, especially the security forces. Given the enormous importance of the state as the instrument of Afrikaner advance, it would not be surprising if its organs, rather than streets, factories or farms, provided the terrain on which the last crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism was played out.

In summary, then, the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism has had four phases; an abortive prelude in the HNP's breakaway, which nonetheless revealed fault lines in the Nationalist coalition; the struggle within the National Party over the permissible limits of reform; the attempt by the Conservative Party to recreate the ideological and social basis of the Nationalist alliance; the struggle from within the organs of state to hinder or even destroy the pattern of negotiation politics liberated by the unbannings of February 1990.

Structural, Economic and Social Change and the Crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism (1) Demographic Change

For a political system whose basis was the classification of people into 'population groups' and assigning status and rights on this basis, demographic change was an important matter. According to Giliomee;

Perhaps the most important political fact in South African history is that from 1700 to the 1950s the proportion of whites to the overall population of South Africa was always sufficient to man all the strategic positions in the political, economic and administrative system of the country.⁵⁹

From 1910 to 1950, the white population maintained itself at over 20% of the total population, but between 1950 and 1985, the percentage dropped from 20.9% to 15%. This relative demographic decline has not been arrested, and it is projected that by 2010 whites will account for only 11% of the population. This decline has coincided with two other tendencies; extensive economic development and growth in all aspects of the state's responsibilities. The coincidence of these three trends forced the apartheid system up against

its own administrative and economic limits. In both private and public sectors, there were too few whites to staff the bureaucracies which administered apartheid, or alone to sustain the economic growth on which white prosperity and security was based.

The changing demographic profile of the South African population contributed to a general crisis of white supremacy in several ways. Firstly, it undermined the belief that whites could continue to rule on their own terms. Secondly, it forced open the way for black entry into skilled and administrative jobs in both private and public sector. This altered the class composition of black communities and created new opportunities for leadership and organisation which were taken up by trade unions, the Black Consciousness Movement and latterly by the United Democratic Front and the ANC. The impressive expansion of black education which the demographic shift and the shortage of white manpower made necessary, raised black expectations and opened up what was to be the most important theatre of struggle in the seventies and eighties. Thirdly, the need to address black aspirations had repercussions within the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance, exacerbating the class tensions and populist discontents which contributed to the formation of the HNP.

(2) The Changing Structure of South African Industry

The rapid economic growth which South Africa achieved in the 1950s and especially the 1960s reflected not only increases in production but also alterations in the distribution of economic activity. The key development was the increase in manufacturing industry's share of production relative to mining and agriculture. By 1965, the contribution of manufacturing to South Africa's GDP was greater than that of

agriculture and mining and in the 1960s, employment in manufacturing increased by 70%; by 1970, this sector employed more people than any other.⁶⁰ While the South African economy as a whole grew at impressive rates of between 4% and 5.5% during the 1950s and 1960s, manufacturing grew even more quickly, at rates of over 7% between 1957 and 1969, and over 6% between 1969 and 1974.⁶¹

It is in the growth of manufacturing industry that the structural problems of the political economy of apartheid have been most apparent. Price⁶² summarises the socio-political effects of the rise of manufacturing in the following terms; blacks were increasingly drawn to the cities by the attraction of employment opportunities and the increasingly impoverished state of the homelands; manufacturing industries needed technically capable, literate and trained workers unlike agriculture and mining⁶³ where the priority had been ultra-cheap and unskilled labour; when the white market for manufactured goods began to be saturated in the 1970s, the need for growth ran up against the near-subsistence level of black incomes.

These effects directly confronted some of the central foundations of apartheid, namely that blacks should be considered as no more than temporary 'sojourners' in 'white' areas for the sole purpose of selling their labour; that blacks should be educated only for unskilled and menial employment; that categories of occupation should be reserved for whites, irrespective of market requirements for labour; and that black wages should be kept down in the interests of employers in mining and agriculture.⁶⁴ These structural constraints to the further growth of manufacturing industry helped create a lobby for reform within business circles. As Greenberg has pointed out,⁶⁵ throughout the apartheid period, secondary industry and commerce have been uneasy

about the rigid framework of racial labour controls, especially selected aspects of them like job discrimination. But expressions of disaffection and even challenge have been a minor theme in a generalised accommodation to the needs of primary industry and National Party ideology:

Only during periods of serious political disorder and economic dislocation have businessmen renewed their search for other ways of organising a labour force. And even then, they have quickly abandoned the issue when order was restored or when the government seemed strong enough to resist the pressures for reform.⁶⁶

The basis of this accommodation was increasingly questioned from the late 1970s onwards however. Recognition of the structural limits on economic growth and growing black resistance stimulated criticism of the efficacy and legitimacy of the homelands system and efforts to keep blacks out of cities. By comparison with the past, this criticism was more serious, more sustained, and came from Afrikaner businessmen as well as their English-speaking counterparts.⁶⁷ This last feature highlights another important structural development, the changing social composition of the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance.

(3) The Changing Social Composition of Afrikaner Nationalism

The social differentiation of Afrikaners as a consequence of economic growth and the use made by nationalist governments of the state as an instrument of ethnic economic advance, have been recognised for over twenty years.⁶⁸ More recently, these phenomena and their implications for the alignment of political forces both within Afrikaner Nationalism and in the wider polity, have been documented and discussed at length.⁶⁹

The contours of the Afrikaner economic advance can be outlined in four developments. Firstly, there has been considerable movement between occupational categories. In 1936, 41.2% of Afrikaners followed 'agricultural occupations', declining to 8.1% in 1977. 'Blue collar and other manual' occupations rose to a high of 40.7% in 1946 and declined to 26.7% in 1977, while 'white collar' categories accounted for 65.2% of Afrikaners in 1977, up from 27.5 in 1936.⁷⁰ Substantial numbers of those in white collar categories were in professional and managerial categories, thanks to enormously increased provision for higher education in Afrikaans-medium universities and technical colleges.

Secondly, ownership and control by Afrikaners of assets in the private sector of the South African economy grew from 9.6% in 1948 to 20.8% in 1975.⁷¹ Thirdly, there was a substantial movement of Afrikaners from country to town. Fourthly, Afrikaners became heavily dependent on the state for employment:

By 1968 there were twice as many Afrikaners in government jobs than before the election of 1948. In 1976, some 60 percent of the white labour force in the public and semi-public service were Afrikaners....Sadie estimates that in 1977 some 30 percent of the whites employed are in the public and semi-public sector. Some 35 percent of all economically active Afrikaners are in this sector against only 25 percent English-speaking whites who occupy less than ten percent of the top positions.⁷²

In their turn, the political effects of these social changes can be summarised as follows. Occupational mobility and the emergence of a substantial class of Afrikaans-speaking capitalists sharpened class tensions within Afrikaner

Nationalism and eroded the resources which previously had contained them. At the same time, black resistance and faltering economic growth dramatically raised the costs and narrowed the margins of policy choices in maintaining the apartheid system. Afrikaner businessmen became increasingly influential in the Nationalist alliance, and at the same time came to recognise interests in common with their English-speaking counterparts and to look for class allies rather than exclusively ethnic ones. Afrikaners who occupied advanced positions in the economy began to feel that their security would be better served by the advancement of blacks than their exclusion from the economy, and that they could feel more secure in the face of this development by virtue of their skills, than through ethnic solidarity.

Occupational mobility, economic security, urbanisation and social differentiation, also encouraged a more cosmopolitan world view in which blatant racism had no place. These trends also favoured secularisation at the expense of ethnic mythology, a revisionist approach to ideology, a more impersonal style of administration and a technocratic and managerial, rather than a volk-orientated rationale for the state.

The Revival of Black Militancy and the Crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism

The South African government's campaign of arrests, prosecutions and prohibitions aimed at outlawing and dispersing organised resistance to apartheid, was successful in creating a period of coerced acquiescence and repressive stability which lasted from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. Although the Nationalist government was briefly shaken into uncertainty by the liberation movements' campaigns in 1960, the leadership soon recovered and

demonstrated that hopes of a spontaneous revolutionary uprising by the black masses were altogether unrealistic.

Two major lessons were learned: firstly, the mass of black people were not prepared to risk their security and meagre privileges in any active political engagement of the authorities, and secondly, the South African state was easily able to control and repress the most determined public dissidence from the radical wings of black society.⁷³

The government's victory over the now-exiled liberation movements gave it the political space to carry out the social engineering dimension of apartheid, especially forced removals, preparing the homelands for independence, and imposing Bantu Education on blacks. Conversely, the social and economic needs of so-called 'urban Africans' were neglected in this period. Not only did these apartheid measures fail to gain for the system the legitimacy that its most zealous proponents anticipated however, they were instrumental in re-shaping black resistance in novel and potentially threatening forms. The re-emergence of this altered and re-vitalised militancy⁷⁴ was perhaps the central element in the various crises of white rule which crystallised in the 1970s and of which the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism was one.

Black opposition to apartheid was of course shaped by the exploitation and repression of blacks and the basic illegitimacy of the regime in their eyes. But the specific forms opposition took in the 1970s were affected by two organisational and ideological currents which were reflected respectively in the growth of the independent black trade union movement and the Black Consciousness Movement.

Black Trade Unions

Black workers were excluded from independent participation in the state-controlled system of industrial relations in which bargaining between employers and white unions took place. Insofar as questions of black employment were addressed, it was as a rigidly controlled adjunct to this bureaucratic system. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, changes in the South African economy undermined this carefully stratified system. The long post-war boom which saw rapid growth in the manufacturing sector brought great increases in the number of Africans employed in secondary industry, as whites moved on and up into non-manual clerical and supervisory categories, and as the absolute demand for semi-skilled operatives grew. As Lambert and Webster put it, "Through the concentration of large numbers of workers in production, the material conditions for a strengthened shop floor-based trade unionism had been created by the early 1970s".⁷⁵

Despite these altered circumstances, the existing system of industrial relations could be sustained as long as African workers' material conditions did not deteriorate, but this is what happened in the early 1970s. One study claims that the price of essential commodities for African families increased 40% between 1971 and 1973.⁷⁶ The new possibilities of worker militancy were dramatically illustrated in the Durban strikes of 1973 which ignited a wave of industrial unrest elsewhere in the country, to the extent that over 200 000 black workers came out on strike between January 1973 and mid-1976.⁷⁷

The Durban strikes, which were very largely spontaneous events, generating their own imitative momentum and ad hoc organisational forms, demonstrated to the workers themselves

and to employers and the government, the possibilities of mass working-class action. From this point onward, it was clear that black trade unions would emerge and that there would be a struggle to define the terms under which they would develop. The two principal issues that would determine the processes involved were what degree of independence would the new black unions enjoy and whether they would evolve into narrowly industrial bodies, concerned only with 'production' struggles, or as 'political' unions, concerned with the wider context which shaped the social and political context of workers' lives. A third and a fourth issue were linked to these; to what extent would unions become affiliated in one or more federation or congress? What relationship (if any) would develop between the emerging unions and the banned and exiled liberation movements?

These issues have been addressed in some twenty years of struggles between unions, employers and the state. The context of these struggles has been of both reform and repression and their resolution has tended towards the emergence of independent unions grouped in two large federations, embracing both industrial and political dimensions, and having strong links to the liberation movements. The importance of the emergence of black trade unions in the 1970s lies in the fact that they represented a form of opposition that the state could not simply repress. The structural impediments to growth in the South African economy could not be adequately addressed unless the increasingly numerous and strategically important African working class could be brought within a stable system of industrial relations which recognised workers as bearers of rights and not merely disposable units of labour. This admission, embodied in the 1979 report of the Wiehahn Commission which paved the way for official recognition of black trade unions in the Industrial Conciliation Act of the

same year, had profound implications for the wider political system. Among these implications was the fact that the privileged position of the white worker in the state-backed system of industrial relations and in the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance was definitively ended.

The Black Consciousness Movement

The second strand of renewed black resistance was provided by the Black Consciousness Movement which developed from the late 1960s, enjoyed an open and influential existence in the early 1970s and was stifled in the repressive measures which followed the Soweto uprising. The movement reflected an appreciation of the shortcomings of previous oppositional tendencies and of the difficulties of finding effective means of confronting the repressive power of the apartheid state. In the first instance, Black Consciousness reflected an explicit, radical and uncompromising rejection of white liberalism as a counterfeit and enervating influence on blacks. Less explicit, but in keeping with the movement's ideology, was a rejection of the ANC's espousal of a non-racial alliance against apartheid. In another point of difference with the ANC, Black Consciousness was non-violent, and did not call for direct action to overthrow the apartheid regime. In keeping with these orientations, Black Consciousness stressed the essential unity of black people's experience and sought to raise their self-esteem, substituting a positive psychological disposition to the experience of being black for the negative images of colonialism and the cultural imperialism which were allegedly characteristic of 'friends' like the liberals as well as enemies.

In order to do these things, the followers of Black Consciousness created community projects, workshops and

cooperatives (mainly in the fields of health and education) which would demonstrate the viability, vitality, and even superiority of black-run enterprises to the segregated and inferior provision of the state. The principal organisational impetus for mobilising Black Consciousness came first from the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) -- whose creation as a breakaway from the white-dominated National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) marked the decisive break with liberal multiracialism -- and then from the Black People's Convention (BPC), a federation of community groups aimed at disseminating the movement's influence which had hitherto largely been confined to the campuses of universities, theological seminaries and schools.

The place of Black Consciousness in the renewal of resistance to apartheid is a disputed one. Its critics dwell on the movement's lack of clearly articulated long-term strategy to give political direction to its cultural and psychological dimensions. Its narrowly middle-class membership and inability to engage the black working class is another criticism, as is the lack of a coherent relationship with the exiled liberation movements. Debate over the movement's significance emerges especially in the context of rival explanations for the Soweto uprising in 1976. Tom Lodge assesses these interpretations and arbitrates between them, coming to the conclusion that even if the formal organisational structures of the Black Consciousness Movement were not directly involved in planning the protests which led to the Soweto uprising:

Given the fact that Black Consciousness seems to have been especially pervasive among university students, school teachers and churchmen it would surely have been a little surprising if sentiments inspired from it were not found in schoolchildren for whom

such people were an important reference group.⁷⁸

The Black Consciousness Movement was effectively suppressed in the months following the Soweto uprising, in a wave of individual detentions and harassment (the most notorious of them being the murder of Steve Biko in police custody in September 1977) and the banning of its principal organisations and publications (October 1977). Although the ideology of Black Consciousness was carried on in other organisational forms (notably the Azanian People's Organisation, AZAPO) the movement's influence was probably more important in a more diffuse and pervasive way. One essential (and crucial) difference between black resistance to apartheid as it developed into the 1980s, and the opposition movements of the 1950s and 1960s, is that the former was widely diffused through hundreds of community-based structures. While it was easy for the regime temporarily to cripple opposition in the 1960s by banning the principal organisations, by the 1980s resistance could not be neutralised because it had such deep and broad roots in communities.⁷⁹ It is likely that this has been one of Black Consciousness's most enduring legacies. Another has been the provision, not only of recruits, but of leadership for the ANC and UDF.

Probably the most important and politically sophisticated leaders in the UDF graduated from the ranks of the Black Consciousness Movement in the early and mid-1970s.⁸⁰

The revival of black resistance to apartheid was the most conspicuous and dynamic element of the gathering crisis which faced the system of white rule in all its manifestations from the mid 1970s onwards. Where the frontal assault of the Defiance Campaign and the armed struggle had

been contained, the flanking attacks of black trade unionism and Black Consciousness exposed vulnerabilities in the system. Both the emerging black unions and the Black Consciousness Movement were subject to repression and harassment, but in important ways they went with, rather than against influential economic and political currents in the white minority.

The emergence of black unions was not only compatible with the modernising demands of South African industry, it was a condition of satisfying them. As industrialists and even the government came to realise, it was not a question of simply repressing the unions (although this was an option to be exercised when the political dimension of union activities threatened wider imperatives of maintaining white rule) but also of accommodating them. The strategy of accommodation had its own problems however. Firstly, it helped deepen divisions in white politics between reformers and reactionaries and secondly, given the wider exclusions and repressions that black political aspirations were subject to, it proved impossible to confine black unions to a purely industrial role.

The case is more difficult to make for Black Consciousness whose moment of direct influence was shorter, and whose organisational structures were more thoroughly and finally repressed. Yet even here it is possible to see how the oblique and innovative forms of opposition to white rule which Black Consciousness represented helped to shape the crisis of white rule. To begin with white liberals (disapprovingly) and supporters of apartheid (with satisfaction) believed that Black Consciousness was "...entrenching the idea of racial exclusivity and therefore doing the government's work".⁸¹ As the government-supporting Die Burger put it;

The people with whom this new thinking has taken root reject the condescension with which they have often been regarded by whites who represented themselves as their only friends. And they do not want to be objects of white politics any longer, but desire to determine their future themselves as people in their own right .. In South Africa we can be thankful that certain opportunities have been created in advance for the realisation of the new ideas. It has been done among other things by the development of the Bantu homelands .. The new spirit thus fits in well with the objectives of our relations policy.⁸²

These misconceived sentiments may well have reflected a stiff dose of wishful thinking, but Black Consciousness's espousal of non-violence, rejection of white liberals and willingness to use segregated educational institutions as its main theatre of operations, offered the superficial hope that here was a movement which was going to oppose apartheid on its own terms. This misconception lasted long enough to give Black Consciousness valuable political space to carry out its work of consciousness raising and community organisation. When SASO provoked the authorities with militant shows of support for the victories of liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique, repression of Black Consciousness began in earnest, yet it was not until over a year after the Soweto uprising that the movement felt the full weight of the state. By this time the extent of Black Consciousness's radical (if inchoate) rejection of apartheid was clear, and even the most wilfully self-deluded supporter of that policy could not believe that the movement somehow reflected its vindication. It is likely that this realisation was particularly influential in convincing reform nationalists of the bankruptcy of Verwoerdian apartheid. After all, Black Consciousness was pre-eminently

the movement of the emerging black service bourgeoisie (teachers, students, journalists, writers and artists, clergy, doctors and other medical personnel) who had benefited from the expansion of black education and ought (in the eyes of apartheid apologists) to have been the show-piece products of segregation. If this influential intellectual elite so bitterly denounced the system which produced them, there was little hope for its eventual legitimacy.

In their different ways, then, black trade unions and Black Consciousness altered the political terrain and the agenda of resistance and opposition. Each in its own way showed that there were possibilities which belonged neither to the armed struggle (against which all whites could unite), nor in acquiescence to apartheid (whose political and economic constraints and contradictions were beginning to exercise some whites). In this way they helped to shape the crisis of white rule as a crisis which divided, rather than united the ruling group.

The Deterioration of South Africa's External Environment and the Crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism

The survival of apartheid and nationalist rule depended on South Africa's domestic political and international environments remaining stable. Serious domestic instability would frighten foreign investors, vindicate those who claimed apartheid was a threat to international peace and security, call into question the motives of those opposed to international ostracism and other punitive measures, and enhance the credibility and raise the morale of exiled liberation movements.

In their turn, unfavourable international developments would open possibilities for domestic opposition, raising the morale of resisters and making the costs of resistance seem more acceptable. A marked feature of the crisis of the 1970s was the way in which domestic and international events had these multiplier effects on each other. The key events in this relationship were the withdrawal of Portugal from its African colonies⁸³ and the Soweto uprising.

The security of white rule in South Africa depended on; the inability or unwillingness of a great power to intervene militarily in the region; the continuation of white rule in the larger three of South Africa's neighbours, Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique; and the ability of South African governments to convince Western states that for a variety of reasons (principally strategic and economic) their active participation in destabilising white rule would work against their own global interests. This combination of domestic, regional and global imperatives was (as is always the case in international relations) vulnerable to changes outside the control of the South African government. These included shifts in the balance of power between the superpowers, changes of government in the major Western powers, the fortunes of anti-colonial wars elsewhere in the region and the vagaries of the international economy, to which South Africa as an exporter of primary products and importer of technology and capital goods⁸⁴ was particularly prone.

During the 1970s, all of these elements were subject to change, ensuring that the crisis of continued white rule had a pronounced external dimension. The debilitating effects of the Vietnam war on American foreign policy not only highlighted material constraints on American ability to engage Soviet-backed revolutionary wars of liberation in the Third World, but helped bring to power an administration in

1976 whose perceptions of such conflicts differed from those of its predecessors. It could not be said that American foreign policy under President Carter reflected a decisive commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle, but the tilt towards white ruled states embodied in NSC Memorandum 39, which underlay Kissinger's policy in the region, was discredited. The coming to power of a Labour government in Britain in 1974, again did not reflect a swing to decisive activism. But the British abandonment of the Simonstown Agreement -- the most emphatic symbol of South Africa's self-evaluated strategic importance to the West -- was an indication of a more generally unfavourable alteration in circumstances.

Linked to altered Western perceptions of capability, self-interest and South Africa's status as a global asset, of course, was the USSR's forward policy in the Third World. Taking advantage of American confusions, self-doubts and hesitations, able to deploy a long-range strategic re-supply capability for the first time and to take advantage of an increasingly favourable climate among Third World non-aligned states, the USSR embarked on a policy of active support for the new states and liberation movements of the Southern African region. The effect of this on South African policy-makers was greatly heightened by Cuba's semi-independent pursuit of the same policy by the more drastic means of direct military involvement.

The point around which these developments coalesced was the withdrawal of Portugal from its African colonies.

Independence for Angola and Mozambique under the revolutionary movements which had fought anti-colonial wars, exposed the flanks of white rule in Rhodesia and South West Africa, provided the exiled liberation movements with bases on South Africa's borders, opened up the region to Soviet

and Cuban influence, and embroiled South Africa in military operations far outside its borders. The liberation of Portugal's colonies gave an immediate boost to the morale of the already burgeoning internal black resistance movements. Pro-Frelimo rallies provoked the first major crack-down by the government on the Black Consciousness Movement which culminated in a seventeen month trial (July 1975-December 1976) of nine SASO and BPC members which, "...instead of contributing to the suppression of Black Consciousness ideology .. by giving the accused a continuous public platform through the press, merely disseminated the ideology even more widely, and held up to youth once again a model of 'rebel' courage".⁸⁵

The Soweto uprising was the essential domestic complement to South Africa's deteriorating external environment, the catalyst which ensured that the deterioration would continue and intensify.⁸⁶ The killing of unarmed and youthful demonstrators, the sheer number of casualties and the ferocity of the repression which touched every manifestation of black opposition, threw every aspect of the apartheid system into sharp relief for an international audience and emphasised that for black people the only changes since the killing of unarmed demonstrators at Sharpeville 16 years before had been for the worse. As with so many other things, 1976 was a decisive turning point in the deterioration of South Africa's internal relations.

The symbiotic effect of increased domestic resistance and deteriorating international conditions was to ensure that apartheid would move up the agenda of international concern, causing a groundswell of governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental concern which though fluctuating in intensity, could not be rolled back.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CRISES OF AFRIKANER
NATIONALISM AND ULSTER UNIONISM

The crises which beset Ulster Unionism from the early 1960s and Afrikaner Nationalism from the mid 1970s were crises of governing in the face of opposition which threatened not merely the tenure of a government but the existence of the state. Opposition movements in both cases arose in contexts, took organisational forms, and followed strategies which indicated to at least some members of the ruling regimes that repression would not be a sufficient response to them and that their respective states would have to broaden the basis of their legitimacy.

They were also crises of economic management. In Northern Ireland, the problem of long-term economic decline called into question the unionist government's ability to reproduce its own support base in the face of discontent among Protestant workers. Paradoxically, the strategies it adopted proved a greater threat to unity than the material grievances of its supporters. In South Africa the problem was stalled growth, and its focus was not the Nationalists' own supporters. The material costs of slowed growth could at first be forced on blacks. Apartheid however was a very costly system which needed high rates of economic growth to survive. Wasteful duplication, social engineering in the form of forced removals or the consolidation of 'homelands', the rising costs of security in the face of black opposition and a deteriorating regional environment, were all extremely expensive items. In any case, as the Durban strikes showed, the discontent of a now-numerous and economically strategic black proletariat at declining living standards, could threaten political destabilisation in the future.

They were also crises of autonomy in which questions were posed about the respective states' and regimes' abilities to withstand external pressures. Both could not avoid being judged by the standards of larger polities and communities, especially those with which they claimed affinity and membership. Northern Ireland could not escape from the 'British standards' of administration and social justice invoked by the Civil Rights Movement, and after considerable prompting by events, the British government. For South Africa, no amount of realist or legalistic advocacy could equip it to evade or ignore the post-Nuremberg and post-colonial environment of discourse on human rights, and the notion of 'Western values' whose invocation it invited by claiming a Western persona for itself. In both cases, there were those in the ruling groups who would recognise the reality that their states were not morally, politically or economically self-sufficient, and those who would not.

These common features might suggest that the crises had some common root, or at least some essential quality in which they might be characterised. In the literature which discusses the recent history of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, the word 'modernisation' is frequently invoked. Can these stressful and catalytic periods be characterised as crises of modernisation?

To do so would in some sense be to risk misunderstanding and miscasting the movements. There was much in their respective cycles of growth and maturity that was 'modernised' and very little that could be accurately labelled 'pre-modern'. Both were from the first, the creations of mass suffrage and the modern political party. Both depended on education, mass literacy and the mass media. Ulster Unionism's most effective mobilising device in the Home Rule Crisis was the Ulster Volunteer Force, the very model of a modern citizen

army with its functional divisions (transport, communications, supply, medical corps, womens' auxiliary, motorised detachment) and its reliance on the latest technology, all celebrated by an impressive public relations machine.⁸⁷ Afrikaner Nationalism's development of an elaborate ideology and use of the state as an instrument of social engineering could hardly have been more characteristically modern.

To characterise them as anachronistic movements belatedly trying to get to grips with changing circumstances in a 'crisis of modernisation' would, as a result, be misleading. The truth is, both were flexible and durable hybrids of modernisation and atavism. The elaboration of a sacred mythology out of elements like the Trek and the Covenant in Afrikaner Nationalism was the correlate of the Nationalists' determination to capture state power and modernise themselves by entering and ultimately controlling an industrial economy. The preoccupation of Ulster Unionists with the religious and monarchical wars of the seventeenth century in a perpetually re-lived historical present, went hand-in-hand with the claim to represent the interests of modernised, industrial classes against the threat of rule by backward peasants and an obscurantist church. For both, atavistic forms of identity co-existed with advanced forms of social and political organisation in a potent mobilising combination. As Mason puts it;

The existence and utilisation of symbols of unity emphasising past communal achievements and experiences should not be taken uncritically as evidence that the exponents of such unity are simply mourning a lost past. It cannot be assumed that the movements and actions justified partly by reference to such symbols are merely representative of an unreconstructed 'traditionalism' or new expressions of a primordial form of social

cohesion and identity.nationalism as a doctrine, appeals both to 'modernist' and 'traditional' symbols. It thus acts as a bridge enabling a 'modern' political movement to offer the salvation and reunification of a 'traditional' community, whilst at the same time deriving its strength from the mobilising capacity that communally rooted symbols of identity may offer.⁸⁸

The crises of Afrikaner Nationalism and of Ulster Unionism threatened to disturb the coexistence of these elements, indeed served notice that such coexistence was no longer possible in movements which ruled heterogeneous and divided societies. It was in this sense that they were crises of modernisation, and more specifically they focussed on two modernising principles. The first was that economic rationality and bureaucratic planning should take precedence over communal favouritism in policy-making and administration. The second was that the principle of equal citizenship is the surest guarantee of legitimacy. The following chapter will make it plain that these principles (especially in South Africa) were not conceded fully, nor were they pursued with decisiveness, alacrity and generosity. Nevertheless, they were the subversive concessions to modernisation in which the crises of economic, social, and political pressures, internal and external, presented themselves to the ruling regimes in both states.

The discussion so far has concentrated on the similar contours of the crises as they developed in Northern Ireland and South Africa, but there were also some essential and influential differences. The most important of these centred on the question of social change within the ruling coalitions, and the relative fragility of the state structures.

It has already been pointed out⁸⁹ how the class composition of Afrikaner nationalism changed with the years of National Party rule from a predominantly agricultural and blue collar profile to one with a high loading of white collar workers in state and parastatal employment. The same degree of mobility was not evident in the ranks of Ulster Unionism. The 1971 census for Northern Ireland revealed the following percentages of economically active Protestants (men and women) in certain occupational categories:

TABLE 1: Protestant Men and Women⁹⁰

Professional/managerial	15%
Lower-grade non-manual	26%
Skilled manual	19%
Semi-skilled manual	25%
Unskilled/unemployed	15%

The percentage in unambiguously working-class occupations is 59%. When only men are considered, the percentage rises to 67%:

TABLE 2: Protestant Men

Professional/managerial	16%
Lower-grade non-manual	17%
Skilled manual	27%
semi-skilled manual	24%
Unskilled/unemployed	15%

The difference may be accounted for by the relatively high number of women in low-paid non-manual service occupations. These figures show the continuing predominance⁹¹ of working class occupations among Ulster Protestants and are in clear

contrast to those quoted by Adam and Giliomee for the changing occupational structure of Afrikaners, which reveal that by 1977, only 26.7% of them were in 'blue collar or other manual' jobs. In any case, it should be recalled that many of these individuals occupied posts that were essentially supervisory (of African labour) in nature, and whose working class status has been challenged in several interpretations. Fifty years of 'defensive ascendancy'⁹² did little to alter the class structure of Protestant Ulster, but in South Africa, thirty years of assiduous social engineering under nationalist rule ensured that its crisis of authority and unity was partly caused by the social differentiation of its own constituency, and the other elements of the crisis (black opposition, external pressure) acted on this greatly altered social formation.

The contrasting class structures of Afrikaner Nationalism from the mid-1970s, and Ulster Unionism from the 1960s suggest interpretative keys to how the two movements experienced their similarly structured crises. It could be argued for instance that working class predominance in Unionism's support base means that a greater proportion of Ulster Protestants could be described as insecure, or even marginal in their material circumstances than Afrikaner Nationalists. An indication of this insecurity is offered by the incidence of unemployment. In 1971, 6.6% of male Protestants were out of work (the figure for men and women was 5.6%),⁹³ rising dramatically during the 1970s to 12.4% by 1981.⁹⁴ At all times, the rate for Catholics has been very significantly worse, and it has risen at a higher rate. Indeed unemployment is widely seen as the greatest difference in material circumstances between Catholics and Protestants and as a result considerable debate has taken place around rival explanations for the gap.⁹⁵ What is not at issue is the fact that Protestants have been vulnerable

to rising unemployment in a declining economy, at a rate consistently above the average for the United Kingdom.⁹⁶ This is in marked contrast to the position of Afrikaners. Figures for unemployment by language group are not available, but the position regarding Afrikaners can be roughly gauged from the fact that in 1970, a mere 4 767 whites (male and female) were unemployed out of an economically active white population of 1 508 901. This means that of 0.3% of whites were unemployed in that year.⁹⁷

Housing provides another example of the condition of working class Protestants. The 1961 census revealed that 19.3% of houses in Northern Ireland had no piped water and 22.6% had no flush toilets.⁹⁸ The situation had not improved by 1974 when another survey indicated that 19.4% of all dwellings in the province were unfit for habitation and over half the houses required remedial action of some kind.⁹⁹ That sub-standard housing was not the exclusive lot of Catholics is demonstrated by this report of the Belfast Medical Officer of Health on housing in the loyalist Shankill Road area in 1973, which found 95% of the houses to be below acceptable standards:

The dwelling houses in this area were built between 1852 and 1887. There was a state of general decay, disrepair, general dampness and instability. Many houses had no secondary means of access necessitating the delivery of fuel and the removal of house refuse through the dwelling. Amenities for personal hygiene were almost non-existent and very few houses have internal WCs. There was inadequate provision for cooking of foods and, in many cases, improvised sculleries had enclosed the drains and obstructed lighting and ventilation...¹⁰⁰

Another indication of the poor housing endured by Protestants (and evidence that it was a rural as well as

urban problem) is the fact that an attack on poor housing conditions of Protestants and Catholics was the centrepiece of the Rev. Ian Paisley's successful populist appeal to the voters of the Bannside constituency in 1969, his first breakthrough into electoral politics.

Being a member of a dominant class alliance clearly meant much less in the way of absolute standards of living and material security for working class Protestants in Northern Ireland, than it did for even the declining portion of Afrikaners who could be classified as blue collar workers. This opens the possibility that the relative insecurity of Ulster Protestants would predispose them to react in a more volatile and directly confrontational way to the prospect of status and material loss than Afrikaners would under similar circumstances of crisis. There is also the possibility that for them, the threshold of perception of such loss might be lower.

Two other attributes of the Ulster Protestants' condition are relevant here. The traditions of sectarian and labourist militancy and independent action which were described in an earlier chapter comprise the first of them. The second concerns the social geography of employment and segregated residence in Northern Ireland, and especially Belfast. Throughout Northern Ireland, Protestants live face to face with Catholics in ways that the spatial dimension of apartheid largely preclude in South Africa. This phenomenon is especially marked in working class areas of Belfast where the communities face each other across urban 'shatter zones', many of which have histories of endemic rioting going back over a century. These areas of hostile proximity encourage feelings of profound insecurity on both sides of the religious and political divide, and are ideal for swift mobilisation for defence or attack in a situation of

communal unrest. This high density residential pattern, often in the shadow of factories, is also conducive to mobilisation for political strikes, 'no-go' areas, and paramilitary recruitment, and allows the possibility of intimidation on which the success of these and other direct action strategies often depends.

By contrast, supporters of Afrikaner Nationalism lived at considerably lower levels of density, at higher material standards and at greater distances from black residential areas. In addition, they did not work in large industrial enterprises where they constituted the overwhelmingly dominant element in the work force, as Protestants did in the shipyards and engineering factories of Belfast.

The presence of such a large, relatively insecure, potentially volatile component in Ulster Unionism's support base suggests that Ulster Protestants would, under stressful conditions, be less likely to trust and follow their leaders, more likely to adopt extremist postures and direct action strategies, and more likely to come into direct conflict with the excluded community and the opposition forces which represented it, than Afrikaner Nationalists under similar situations of crisis.

At the same time, the Afrikaners' rapid, extensive, state-sponsored social mobility ought to have produced an increasingly numerous class of people for whom cultural militance, sectarian mythology and ethnic solidarity had a decreasing appeal. For such a group, command of the state apparatus, from whom so many received their livelihood and most their information, would be more important in securing allegiance than the mobilising devices of the past. The extent, depth, flexibility and resilience of the state structures themselves was one of the principal resources of

the government in its competition with the forces of the right wing which followed Afrikaner Nationalism's crisis of unity. Ulster Unionist governments had no such resources, and no depth of constituency willing to follow a path of reform, comparable to that which has remained loyal to the Nationalist government.

The crises which have been described in this chapter were followed by conflicts between reform and reaction and the dispersal of the previous dominant coalitions. These conflicts will be analysed and discussed in the remaining chapters, when comparative observations of class structure and the state which have comprised the concluding portion of this one will be recalled.

1. Internment of IRA members was used by the Irish government during the Second World when, "In its resolve to defend the state, the cabinet had six IRA men executed .. for the murder of servants of the state whose legitimacy they denied, allowed three others to die on hunger strike, had more than 500 interned without trial and a further 600 committed under the Offences against the State Act." Lee, J. Ireland 1912-1985 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1989) p.223. It was re-introduced in 1957 to deal with the IRA's border campaign.

2. Called by the IRA 'Operation Harvester', and often referred to as 'the border campaign'.

3 See Marcum, J.A. "The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness in Southern African Liberation Movements" in, Potholm, C. and Dale, R. Southern Africa in Perspective (New York, 1972) p.262-275.

4. Townshend, C. Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848 Oxford, Clarendon Press 1983 p.388.

5. Cronin, S. Irish Nationalism: a History of its Roots and Ideology Dublin, Academy Press (1980) p.170. Quoted in Townshend, Political Violence p.387.

6. Townshend, Political Violence p.387. Bishop and Mallie make essentially the same point; "All the energies of the participants had gone into military preparations, and almost no thought had been devoted to the political consequences of their actions or how these might be turned to bringing the goal of a republic nearer". Bishop, P. and Mallie, E. The Provisional IRA London, William Heinemann (1987) p.330. See also, Patterson, H. The Politics of Illusion London Hutchinson Radius (1989) p.78-83. The IRA's statement terminating the campaign in 1962 recognised the absence of popular support, but, avoiding autocritique, blamed 'the people': "Foremost among the factors motivating this course of action has been the attitude of the general public whose minds have been deliberately distracted from the supreme issue facing the Irish people --the unity and freedom of Ireland." IRA chief of staff Ruairi O'Bradaigh, quoted in Ulster by the "Sunday Times" 'Insight' Team, Harmondsworth, Penguin (1972) p.21.

7. On the decision of the ANC to adopt armed struggle see Karis, T. and Carter, G.M. From Protest to Challenge: a Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa Vol. III Stanford, Hoover Institution Press (1977) p.645-51. On the ANC and the PAC, see Lodge, T. Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1983) p.231-260.

8. Lodge, Black Politics p.239.

9. Bew, P. and Patterson, H. The British State and the Ulster Crisis: From Wilson to Thatcher London, Verso (1985) p.33.

10. For this aspect of reform nationalism see Posel, D. "The Language of Domination 1788-83" in Marks, S. and Trapido, S. The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth century South Africa London, Longman (1987) pp.419-444. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson play down this aspect of reform unionism in Northern Ireland, referring to "...the blatantly cosmetic character of O'Neillist planning.." Yet they acknowledge the part played by the ideology of modernising, and O'Neill's "dictatorial" style of politics in stimulating opposition to him within the unionist alliance. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972 Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979) pp.153-4. It is, after all, unlikely that O'Neill's opponents within the party had such a deep and subtle appreciation of his intentions as these authors.

11. All major versions of the crisis rely on the much the same original sources for the state of the Northern Ireland economy. Principal among these are; Isles, K. and Cuthbert, N. An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland Belfast, HMSO (1957); Government of Northern Ireland, Report of the Joint Working Party on the Economy of Northern Ireland (the Hall Report), Cmnd 1835, London (1962); Government of Northern Ireland, Economic Development in Northern Ireland (the Wilson Report), Cmnd 479, Belfast (1965). Interpretative accounts based on these sources include; Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland (especially pp.129-161); Bew and Patterson, The British State and the Ulster Crisis especially pp.7-38); Probert, B. Beyond Orange and Green London, Zed Press (1978), (especially pp.65-78); Farrell, M. Northern Ireland: the Orange State London, Pluto Press (1976), (especially pp.226-256). See also; Parker, S. and Driver, C. "Capitalism in Ireland" Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists (4) 1975; Boserup, A. "Contradictions and Struggles in Northern Ireland" Socialist Register (1972) pp.157-92; Gibbon, P. "Some Basic Problems of the Contemporary Situation" Socialist Register (1977) pp.81-7; Gordon, D. The O'Neill Years: Unionist Politics 1963-69 Belfast, Atholl Books (1990).

12. Parker and Driver, "Capitalism in Ireland" p.8.

13. Probert, Beyond Orange and Green p.65.

14. Probert, Beyond Orange and Green p.76.

15. Probert, Beyond Orange and Green p.75.

16. Probert, Beyond Orange and Green p.79.

17. In the 1965 Stormont election, the NILP lost two of the Belfast seats it won in 1962, and overall there was a swing to the Unionists of seven per cent. Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland p.157.

18. Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland p.156.

19. Bew et al, The Sate in Northern Ireland.. p.150.

20. Lee, Ireland 1912-85 p.414.

21. Townshend, Political Violence p.187.

22. For the re-appraisal in the Republican movement, see Patterson, The Politics of Illusion pp.84-110.
23. Patterson, The Politics of Illusion p.91.
24. On the Nationalist Party see, McAllister, I. "Political Parties, Traditional and Modern" in Darby, J. (ed.) Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict Belfast, Appletree Press (1983) especially pp.71-75.
25. On the Ancient Order of Hibernians see the entry in Flackes, W.D. and Elliot, S. Northern Ireland: A Political Directory, 1968-88 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1988) p.65. On the early sectarian character of the Nationalists, see Lee, Ireland 1912-85 p.10; Gray, J. City in Revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast Dock Strike of 1907 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1985) pp.51-55 and pp.152-155; Budge, I. and O'Leary, C. Belfast, Approach to Crisis London, Macmillan (1973) pp.120-123.
26. Emerging Catholic radicals in the civil rights and republican movements referred jeeringly to the Nationalist Party as 'green Tories'.
27. By the 1960s, Catholic opposition in Belfast was led not by the Nationalist Party but by splinter groups which combined labourist rhetoric and personal brokerage. The most notable exponent of this brand of politics was Gerry Fitt, Republican Labour MP first for the Stormont constituency of Dock, and then (from 1966) Westminster MP for West Belfast. He is now Lord Fitt of Dock.
28. On the dynamics of Catholic politics in the 1960s, see Farrell, The Orange State pp.238-246, and Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland pp.163-174.
29. NICRA's constitution was modelled on that of the British National Council for Civil Liberties. For a summary of its seven principal demands see the report of the Cameron Commission and Wallace, M. British Government in Northern Ireland: From Devolution to Direct Rule Newton Abbot, David and Charles (1982) p.28.
- 30 One of the Civil Rights Association's campaign themes was for 'British Standards' of rights and administration.
31. Although republicans participated in the civil rights movement in their reshaped, progressive persona: "This undoubtedly serious commitment to winning Protestants through a process of political reform and the stated opposition to Catholic sectarianism and any resort to violence, could not compensate for the unreconstructed assumptions that survived from the traditional nationalist project". Patterson, The Politics of Illusion pp.100-101.
32. Important among these was the group, People's Democracy, based largely at Queen's University Belfast and consisting mainly of left-wing students. See Farrell, Northern Ireland: the Orange State pp.247-255. For an objective view, see Arthur, P. The People's Democracy, 1968-73 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1974). Bew, et al, refer to People's Democracy in terms of; "...a general period of fluidity and

competition in Catholic politics which created opportunities for marginal groups of Marxist revolutionaries to capture the stage briefly"; The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72 p.170.

33. Government of Northern Ireland, Disturbances in Northern Ireland p.15.

34. For example, Arthur, The People's Democracy p.23; Farrell, The Orange State p.238.

35. Bew, et al, The State in Northern Ireland pp.165-171, accept that the Catholic middle class was growing, but find this sociological development inadequate to explain the political phenomenon of the civil rights movement's success in uniting virtually the whole Catholic community, and offer alternative reasons for the 'political space and impetus' which the movement enjoyed. Another more recent account argues that the Catholic middle class remained small in absolute numbers and that Catholics were still seriously under represented in the grammar school and university populations in the 1950s and 1960s. Morgan, M. and Taylor, R. "Forget the Myths: Here's the Real Story" Fortnight 266, October 1988, pp.6-7.

36. O'Leary and Arthur argue that whatever the size of the Catholic middle class, its 'newness' and the raising of expectations which it represented were decisive factors; "Northern Ireland as the Site of State- and Nation-Building Failures" p.39, n17 in O'Leary, B. and McGarry, J. (eds.) The Future of Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990).

37. See for instance, Currie, A. "Discriminating Interpretations" Fortnight December 1988, p.19; O'Leary and Arthur, "Northern Ireland as the Site of State- and Nation-Building Failures" p.39.

38. Hewitt, C. "Catholic Grievances, Catholic Nationalism and Violence in Northern Ireland during the Civil Rights Period" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 23 (3) 1981: for criticism, see Arthur and O'Leary, "Northern Ireland as the Site of State and Nation-Building Failures" p.36, n15.

39. See above, note 31.

40. Curry, "Discriminating Interpretations". Austin Curry was a Nationalist MP, a prominent civil rights leader and one of the founders of the SDLP.

41. McCann, E. War and an Irish Town Harmondsworth, Penguin Books (1974). See especially pp.30-32. See also Egan, B. and McCormack, V. Burntollet Belfast, LRS Publishers (1969). This source is an account of the march led by People's Democracy from Belfast to Derry in January 1969, and which was attacked by Protestant extremists at Burntollet Bridge. It contains verbatim accounts of McCann's speeches to the marchers which accurately convey the secular rhetoric typical of the civil rights left. See especially pp.23-4 and pp.25-6. The Burntollet incident is discussed below.

42. New Left Review 55, May-June 1969. p.6.

43. Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland p.171. On the 'territorial imperative' in Northern Ireland, see Lyons, F.S. Culture and Anarchy in Ireland Oxford, Oxford University Press (1982) pp.136-7; Budge and O'Leary, Belfast: Approach to Crisis ; Boyd, A. Holy War in Belfast Tralee, Anvil Books (1970). For a Protestant perspective, see Stewart, A.T.Q The Narrow Ground London, Faber and Faber 2e (1989) p.181.

44. See Egan and McCormack, Burntollet. The authors of this investigation were both civil rights activists. Despite its partisan origin however, it is a carefully researched and documented compilation of eye-witness accounts and photographs. It clearly exposes the role of 'B' Specials in the attack and strongly suggests the connivance of police. See especially pp.41-61. See also above, note 41.

45. Section 75 states: "Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland .. or any thing contained in this Act, the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Ireland and every part thereof". The independence of the Irish Free State in 1922 meant that the Act's provisions applied only in the six counties of Northern Ireland. See the Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act 1922, s.1(1). For a discussion of the Northern Ireland Constitution (1920-1968) and a comprehensive bibliography, see Palley, C. "The Evolution, Disintegration and Possible Reconstruction of the Northern Ireland Constitution" Anglo-American Law Review Vol.1 (1), 1972, pp.383-406.

46. For a discussion of the ambiguities surrounding Northern Ireland's participation in the Ottawa Conference see Barton, B. Brookeborough: the Making of a Prime Minister Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies (Queen's University) (1989) pp.75-77.

47. Buckland, P. The Factory of Grievances Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1979) p.4.

48. Buckland, P. The Factory of Grievances Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1979) p.45.

49. See Purdie, B. 'The Friends of Ireland' in T. Gallagher, and J. O'Connell (eds.) Contemporary Irish Studies Manchester, Manchester University Press (1983).

50. The professed support of the new prime minister, Harold Wilson, for Irish nationalism heightened these hopes and fears.

51. On modernisation and the economic transformation of Ireland, see Lee, Ireland 1912-85 pp.329-410, and Brown, T. Ireland: A Social and Cultural History London, Fontana (1981) pp.241-266.

52. Foster, R. Modern Ireland 1600-1972 London, Allen Lane (1988) p.569.

53. Lee, Ireland 1912-85 p.368.

54. "It is frightfully difficult to explain to Protestants

that if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house, they will live like Protestants, because they will see neighbours with cars and television sets. They will refuse to have eighteen children, but if a Roman Catholic is jobless and lives in the most ghastly hovel, he will rear eighteen children on National Assistance. If you treat Roman Catholics with due consideration and kindness, they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritative nature of their Church". Captain Terence O'Neill, quoted in the Belfast Telegraph 10.5.69.

55. Probert, Beyond Orange and Green p.114. See also p.145.

56. For general treatments see Price, R.M. The Apartheid State in Crisis Oxford, Oxford University Press (1991), especially pp.28-78, and Murray, M. South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny London, Verso Books (1987), especially pp.431-440. For a conceptually more ambitious account, see Saul, J. S. and Gelb, S. The Crisis in South Africa (revised edition) London, Zed Books (1986). See also Greenberg, S. Race and State in Capitalist Development Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1980) pp.398-403.

57. On these points see Deborah Posel's critique of 'revisionist' Marxist accounts of South Africa's political economy, notably that of Saul and Gelb in The Crisis in South Africa. Posel, D. "Rethinking the "Race-Class Debate" in South African Historiography" Social Dynamics Vol. 9 (1) 1983, pp.50-66

58. Stadler, A. The Political Economy of Modern South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987) pp.81-2.

59. Giliomee, H. "Apartheid, Verligtheid and Liberalism" in Butler, J. and Elphick, R. (eds.) Democratic Liberalism in South Africa Middletown and Cape Town, Wesleyan University Press and David Philip (1987) p.372. See also, Giliomee, H. "Afrikaner Politics 1977-87: From Afrikaner Nationalist Rule to Central State Hegemony" in Brewer, J.D. Can South Africa Survive? London, Macmillan (1989) pp.108-132, especially pp.111-112, and Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. From Apartheid to Nation-Building Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1989) pp.115-116.

60. Price, The Apartheid State in Crisis pp.P29-30. For statistical tables summarising employment in manufacturing, mining and agriculture, and their respective contributions to GDP, see Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development pp.422-426.

61. Moll, T.C. "The Record and Prospects of the South African Economy" in Brewer, Can South Africa Survive? pp.136-164, especially pp.146-147. Moll explains these high growth rates in terms of, "buoyant international demand and stable terms of trade, an active state import substitution policy, and intervention in strategic economic sectors, cheap raw material and electricity inputs, capital controls compelling higher levels of local investment, and low black wages". p.146.

62. Price, The Apartheid State in Crisis pp.29-36.

63. Although even these sectors (especially in non-gold mining) began to move towards higher-wage, higher-skill, patterns of employment. See Moll, "The Record and Prospects.." p.153, citing Lipton, M. Capitalism and Apartheid Aldershot, Wildwood House (1986) pp.251-2.
64. Price, The Apartheid State in Crisis pp.30-35.
65. Greenberg, S. Race and State in Capitalist Development pp.176-208.
66. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development p.178.
67. For a discussion of the ideology of reform subscribed to by organised Afrikaner business, see Greenberg, S. Legitimizing the Illegitimate: States, Markets and Resistance in South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1987) pp.150-154.
68. See for instance, Adam, H. Modernizing Racial Domination Berkeley, University of California Press (1971) pp.169-182; Welsh, D. "The Political Economy of Afrikaner Nationalism" in Leftwich, A. (ed.) South Africa: Economic Growth and Political Change London, Alison and Busby (1974) pp.261-280.
69. See for instance, Adam, H. and Giliomee, H. Ethnic Power Mobilized New Haven, Yale University Press (1979) pp.145-176; Charney, C. "Class Conflict and the Nationalist Split" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 10 (2) April 1984, pp.269-282; Charney, C. "Towards Rupture or Stasis? An Analysis of the 1981 South African General Election" African Affairs Vol. 81 (325), 1982.
70. Adam and Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilized p.168.
71. This figure excludes agriculture which has been over 80% controlled by Afrikaners since 1938. Adam and Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilized pp.170-171.
72. Adam and Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilized pp.165-6.
73. Schlemmer, L. "Build Up to Revolution or Impasse?" Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol. 18 (1-2) 1983, pp.60-82, at p.61.
74. For a general account of these developments, see Price, The Apartheid State in Crisis pp.46-62. For more detailed treatments, see, Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 pp.321-355; Gerhart, G.M. Black Power in South Africa: the Evolution of an Ideology Berkeley, University of California Press (1978) pp.257-311; Brooks, A. and Brickhill, J. Whirlwind Before the Storm International Defence and Aid Fund, London (1980); Hirson, B. Year of Fire, Year of Ash London, Zed Press (1979); Kane-Berman, J. Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1978); Lambert, R. and Webster, E. "The Re-emergence of Political Unionism in Contemporary South Africa" in Cobbett, W. and Cohen, R. Popular Struggles in South Africa London, James Currey (1988) pp.20-41. Murray, M. South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny London, Verso (1987) pp.129-194; Bonner, P. "Black Trade Unions in South Africa Since World War II" in Price, R. and Rosberg, C. The

Apartheid Regime Berkeley, Institute of International Studies (1980).

75. Lambert and Webster, "The Re-emergence of Political Unionism" p.22.

76. Hemson, D. "Trade Unionism and the Struggle for Socialism in South Africa" Capital and Class (6) 1978, p.19. Quoted in Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa p.357, n17. See also Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash pp.124-5, "...between 1959 and 1961, the household costs of an average African family in Durban increased at almost twice the rate of those of a white family because of rapid increases in food prices. It was no different in the other major centres. Black workers therefore had every reason to complain, but had to find effective means whereby they could express their demands".

77. Hirson, Year of Fire, Year of Ash p.133.

78. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 pp.332-3. See also Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa p.297. "To the high school generation, SASO leaders became heroes who had been bloodied in an actual clash with white authority. One consequence by the end of 1972 was an upsurge in political consciousness among high school students, leading to the creation of a welter of political youth organizations across the country."

79. On this aspect of black resistance in the 1980s, see Brewer, J. "Internal Black Protest" in Brewer, J. Can South Africa Survive? pp.184-205, especially p.187.

80. Swilling, M. "The UDF and Township Revolt" in Cobbett, W. and Cohen, R. Popular Struggles in South Africa London, James Currey (1988) pp.90-113, at p.96. See also, Lodge, T. "The United Democratic Front: Leadership and Ideology" in Brewer, Can South Africa Survive? pp.206-230. Lodge (p.207) lists six of the UDF national executive as having had a background in the Black Consciousness Movement, the second largest group he identifies. See also Barrell, H. "The UDF and the National Forum" in South African Review 2 Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984, pp.6-20, at p.11, note 22.

81. "Sad about SASO" Daily Despatch (East London) 10.8.71. Quoted in Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa p.268.

82. Quoted in Cape Times 9.7.71 and reproduced in Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa p.269.

83. See Jaster, R.S. The Defence of White Power: South African Foreign Policy Under Pressure London, Macmillan (1988) pp.51-78.

84. On South Africa in the international economy see Saul and Gelb, The Crisis in South Africa pp.74-5; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa p.326, Terreblanche, S. and Nattrass, N. "A Periodization of the Political Economy from 1910" in Nattrass, N. and Ardington, E. The Political Economy of South Africa Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1990) p.16, and Moll, "The Record and Prospects of the South African Economy" p.137.

85. Gerhart, Black Consciousness in South Africa pp.298-9. See also Hirson, pp.89-91.

86. On the international implications of Soweto see Barber, J. and Barratt, J. South Africa's Foreign Policy: the Search for Status and Security 1945-1988 Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1990) pp.173-244. These authors refer to 1974-8 as the 'watershed years'.

87. On the UVF see Stewart, A.T.Q The Ulster Crisis London, Faber and Faber (1967) especially pp.69-78 and pp.124-127.

88. Mason, D. "Nationalism and the Process of Group Mobilisation: the Case of 'Loyalism' in Northern Ireland Reconsidered" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 8 (3) July 1985, pp.408-425, at pp.414-416. See also by the same author, (1) "Industrialisation, Race and Class Conflict in South Africa: Towards a Sociological Resolution of a Re-opened Debate" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 3 (2) April 1980, pp.140-154: "...the preservation, salvation or rescue of the Volk required both the affirmation of traditionally rooted symbols of unity and the modernisation of the community." p.149 (emphasis in the original); and (2) "Race Relations, Group Formation and Power: a Framework for Analysis" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 5 (4) October 1982, pp.420-439, especially pp.434-437.

89. See above, note 68.

90. Tables 1 and 2 are taken from Discrimination in Employment in the North of Ireland Pamphlet 2, Irish Social and Economic Research Unit (ISER) Derry, no date (1990?), pp.12-13.

91. The census reports for Ireland in 1901, 1911, and 1921 are difficult to interpret in terms strictly comparable to contemporary figures. A bewildering variety of occupational categories (many of which no longer exist) is used, and it is often difficult to distinguish 'workers' from self-employed entrepreneurs in them. The large numbers in service categories (domestic employment especially) and agricultural occupations also make comparison difficult, and in general it is not easy to compute the global numbers of Protestants in even approximate class categories for the early periods. For this or other reasons, the main historical treatments of Ulster Unionism do not give precise figures for the percentages of Protestants in class categories in the period of Unionism's growth. The figures tend to be used to compare the relative numbers of Catholics and Protestants in specific occupational categories, especially skilled jobs in shipbuilding and engineering (see for example, Farrell, The Orange State p.16). Despite this, no history of Ulster Unionism suggests that fifty years of Unionist rule in Northern Ireland afforded significant opportunities for social mobility among Ulster Protestants, and the universal presumption is that the class structure of Ulster Unionism did not change significantly in this time.

92. The phrase is A.C. Hepburn's. See his The Conflict of Nationality in Ireland London, Edward Arnold (1980).

93. ISER, Discrimination in Employment in the North of Ireland p.14.
94. Smith, D.J. and Chambers, G. Inequality in Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1991) p.161.
95. See for instance Rowthorn, B. and Wayne, N. The Political Economy of Conflict Cambridge, Polity Press (1988) pp.106-119; Smith and Chambers, pp.152-234; Osborne, R.D. and Cormack, R.J. "Unemployment and Religion in Northern Ireland" Economic and Social Review Vol. 17 (3) April 1986, pp.215-223. For an assessment of the debate, see Whyte, J. Interpreting Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990) pp.58-64.
96. In 1981 the average rate of male unemployment in the United Kingdom was 11.3% and for non-Catholics in Northern Ireland it was 12.4%. See Rowthorn and Wayne, The Political Economy of Northern Ireland p.115.
97. South African Statistics: 1976 Pretoria, Department of Statistics (1976) (1.45), Tables of Population and Work Status.
98. Quoted in Farrell, The Orange State p.226.
99. Wallace, British Government in Northern Ireland p.167, quoting a report of the Northern Ireland Housing Trust. Even these grim figures represented remarkable progress; "The housing survey carried out in 1943 showed that most of the houses in the entire province would have to be condemned if the best modern criteria were to be strictly applied; and even if they were not..the minimum that would be required in the near future would be 100 000". Lyons, F.S.L. Ireland Since the Famine Glasgow, Collins/Fontana (1973) p.744. In the event, as Lyons points out, it took nearly twenty years for this total to be reached, leaving the backlog described in the reports quoted by Farrell and Wallace.
100. Quoted in Arthur, P. The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland London, Longman (1980) p.80.

CHAPTER SIXCRISIS AND REFORM IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

It is a commonplace of political discourse that under certain circumstances, reform can be a hazardous business for the reformer. As de Tocqueville puts it;

Generally speaking, the most perilous moment for a bad government occurs when it seeks to mend its ways. Only consummate statecraft can enable a king to save his throne when after a long spell of oppressive rule he sets out to improve the lot of his subjects.¹

In any situation where rulers try to strengthen their position by making concessions to pressure from below, or by anticipatory restructuring, there is a danger that revolutionary forces will find fresh confidence and new opportunities in the altered circumstances presented by specific reforms, or a general atmosphere of change and movement. On the other hand reforms which threaten to appease or co-opt disaffected or excluded groups in society, present a danger to these revolutionary forces, prompting them to adopt more extreme and often violent and destabilising strategies. Reformers undercut revolutionaries and revolutionaries outflank reformers in a risky dialectic of bidding and counter-bidding.

In political systems where hegemony is closely related to ethnicity, these circumstances are compounded by other

contradictions. In a sympathetic assessment of Capt. Terence O'Neill's predicament in the 1960s, Joseph Lee points out that;

..he had embarked on one of the most perilous enterprises in statesmanship, to persuade a triumphalist ascendancy to begin treating its hereditary inferiors as its contemporary equals. O'Neill's policy of integrating Catholics, however gradually into the Stormont state, required not only a change in political behaviour, but the virtual assumption of a new political personality, by unionists. ² (emphasis added).

The parallels with South Africa are striking. There too, the success of reforms meant not only the acceptance of piecemeal acts of policy by the government's supporters, but also an invitation (expressed in various degrees of opacity) to review their sense of political self and revise their understanding of what is alien to that self. In order to carry out the (at first selective and very limited) integration of subordinate communities into hitherto partisan state structures, governments in South Africa and Northern Ireland tried to take advantage of certain secular trends among their supporters.

In Northern Ireland the welfare state and the spread of metropolitan popular culture, through television particularly, and in South Africa the affluence and occupational mobility of new classes of Afrikaners, helped persuade governments that shifts in political identity could be encouraged. The popular coalitions which sustained Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism were mobilised around cultural ethnicity and material advantage, and it was unthinkable that these things could be dispensed with altogether. But they could be adapted to fit changing conditions and political demands. The economic and social

conditions which were already eroding them naturally could be encouraged and a degree of further erosion could be risked. The key objective in both cases was economic growth. If this could be achieved, conditions of rising prosperity for all sections of the community, could help to drain cultural ethnicity of its direct political significance. While ethnicity might increasingly become a colourful sideshow, material advantage would either cease to matter so much in the general affluence, or, more likely, be sustained at a higher level.

Despite the essential simplicity of these strategies, implementing them was a very tall order. Four principal obstacles lay in the way. Firstly, social change had not brought natural decay in the populist base of the class alliances all that far, certainly not far enough for bold and radical moves to create new political alliances outside them. Secondly, although cultural identity and material advantage through discrimination might be subject to erosion, the force which linked them and in the end provided them with political force was self-determination, which was likely to prove more durable. At quite an early point in both cases, reforms aimed at broadening legitimacy seemed to threaten loss of political control and the end of self-determination. This fear put a decisive curb on what reformers would offer, and what their followers would accept.

Thirdly, in both movements, mythology provided exemplary interpretations of past crises, whose functions, from the beginning, had not been limited to celebrating past victories and remembering past hardships. Their key function had always been to provide ready-made moral frameworks in which to interpret current dilemmas, and identify current enemies and traitors with their historical counterparts.

Habits and predispositions to think in these terms which had served both movements well in the past, could not easily be discarded. Fourthly, in both cases reform strategies were chosen in the context of security threats, greatly complicating their justification and implementation. One further point gave urgency to all the other four. Reforms had to be endorsed in periodic elections and popular support for them had to be cultivated and mobilised. Acquiescence was not enough, and within the dominant groups, opposition had ample political space to find expression.

These difficulties were influential in shaping the nature of reform in the two societies, and in defining the different directions in which reformers and reactionaries wished to take Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, leading to the decay and breakup of the two coalitions. They also help to define the framework in which these developments will be discussed in this chapter. In each case, the sources, directions and limitations of reform will be discussed, as well as the agents and audiences of change. Each focus will raise questions about the nature of the political processes involved, and offer media for comparison between the two. Some common themes offer guidance.

Crisis-driven Reform

As argued in the last chapter, the polarisation between reform and reaction in Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism was widely perceived in terms of crises precipitated respectively by the civil rights campaign in Northern Ireland and the Soweto uprising in South Africa. Although the terminology of crisis was accepted widely enough, the understanding of it differed greatly between reformers and reactionaries. Reformers saw the crisis as a crisis of opposition, grounded in a prior condition of

illegitimacy, to which reform was a rational, ex post facto response. Reactionaries saw a crisis of authority, to which reform was a prior, contributory factor. The former saw reform as part of the solution, a condition of a return to stability. Reactionaries saw reform as part of the problem, a destabilising departure from firm government and well-tried principles of solidarity. In both Northern Ireland and South Africa then, reform was indelibly associated, whether positively or negatively, with extraordinary circumstances.

Reform in the Context of Armed Struggle

The association of reform with extraordinary circumstances was heightened by the successful revival of armed struggle by the IRA and the ANC. The demands of structural reform had to be balanced with those not only of public order, but also of counter-insurgency. One of the reasons why Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist regimes were illegitimate was their repressive security laws and partisan security forces, but these were areas in which reform was particularly problematic. A further complicating factor was that in each case public order came to be threatened not only by anti-regime guerrillas, but also by paramilitary organisations of 'ultras'³ among the regimes' erstwhile supporters. Arguments about the causal relationships between reform, disorder and tough security policies constituted one of the principal areas of contest between reformers and reactionaries.

Reform as Modernisation

The central importance of economic growth to reform projects in Northern Ireland and South Africa helped situate them squarely in a discourse of modernisation. In both, the popular elements of coalition-building were downplayed.

Growth itself became an ideological preoccupation, at the expense of openly sectarian, racist, or atavistic rallying cries. Parliament and party were downgraded. Their roles in policy-making and especially their function as legitimising agents, which set limits to the governments' freedom of action, were attenuated. Increasingly, constituencies of the excluded began to be considered. Some formula which satisfied, yet set strict limits to their aspirations had to be calculated. Increasingly, a 'technicist' discourse of bureaucratic and academic contribution to policy-making was canvassed and employed, at the expense of partisan considerations.

Reform from Above

By increasingly shifting public policy choices to the realm of the expert, reform-as-modernisation necessarily acquired the character of reform-from-above. Reformers in both cases aspired to policy-making that was more concentrated and streamlined. Reformers also tried to articulate a conception of interests which contributed to this top-down quality of their policies and strategies. They argued that a general interest subsumed the interests both of the dominant and subordinate groups, that the pursuit of sectional interests either by the privileged or by the excluded would spell disaster for all. In both cases they positioned themselves as forces of the moderate centre, standing above parochial concerns and needing to be free of the parochial restraints which the elements of populist democracy in the governing coalitions imposed. They were unable to accommodate their opponents' rival conceptions of democracy⁴ very far, because they had to reproduce as much of their existing support base as possible and in any case they were afraid of letting the process get out of hand. At the same time they were diluting their own followers' conception of democracy. So without

gaining much credit for extending democracy to the excluded, reforming governments could now be accused of being undemocratic and elitist by disaffected populists among their own supporters.

The Multiple Audiences of Reform

The reform processes in Northern Ireland and South Africa did not represent single axes of conflict between ancien régime and progress. The peculiar nature of their political systems meant that in each there were multiple audiences for reform. The key features in this context were, the confusion of political opposition with the illegitimacy of the state, the question of violence, the ineffectiveness of constitutional opposition, de facto one-party rule and the nature of the ruling coalitions. In each case then, there was an open, constitutional and peaceful opposition, and an underground, violent one. Constitutional and extra-constitutional opposition to reform also came from ultras on the government side. External forces including other governments were interested parties. These audiences were also not merely spectators of course, but also actors. For the most part however, they had no direct purchase on each other. They could make their presence felt only through actions directed at those in power, that is the South African and Northern Ireland governments. As a result, reforming governments found themselves at a nexus of complex and contradictory pressures, from below and from a distance, from inside and outside the formal political system.

REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA⁵

The idea of reform occupies disputed ground in the theory and practice of politics, somewhere between revolution and the status quo. From this vantage point, reformers can

invoke the imperatives of transformation or preservation when expedient, appealing to the respective claims of justice or necessity according to circumstance. Kenneth Minogue captures the ambiguity of reform when he writes;

Nineteenth-century Britain passed three Reform Bills and did not experience a revolution. Yet British politics were 'revolutionised' in the nineteenth century, for the extension of the franchise changed the constitution from oligarchy to democracy, and brought in its train a host of consequent adjustments..... Along these lines, then, we may say that the reform of the franchise was a revolution in British politics. We derive, indeed, the superficial paradox that British politics did, and did not, have a revolution in the nineteenth century.⁶ (emphasis in the original).

Such paradoxical considerations were clearly evident in South Africa between 1979 and 1989 when the need for a reform programme which would broaden the basis of white rule without undermining it altogether dominated the agenda of P.W. Botha's government. The reforms of this period included the extension of industrial rights to Africans by the labour reforms of 1979, the granting of freehold title to Africans resident in urban areas and the abolition of influx control for those resident outside the independent homelands. The extension of political rights to Africans was, however, limited to the creation of Black Local Authorities in 'white' South Africa, while Indians and coloureds were included in the New Constitution of 1983, with chambers of their own in a tricameral parliament.

The process which produced these reforms had four main characteristics. In the first place, it was crisis-driven and justified in terms of the dire consequences of simply standing on the status quo. Secondly, the imperative of

change was matched by that of preservation, in a determination not to relinquish white control. Thirdly, reform was seen both by its agents and critics as a substitute for negotiations with representatives of the black majority. Lastly, the government displayed a ruthless determination to close down, by brute force if necessary, political space in which its conception of reform might be challenged and resisted, or in which the reforms might be exploited to subvert white control. With these features setting limits to its scope and momentum, reform under Botha;

..was a pragmatic and uncoordinated process guided by the need to contain the unfolding contradictions of apartheid, and did not seriously address its (sic) root causes.⁷

By the end of the 1980s, then, three sets of structural constraints had apparently checkmated reform. These were the reformers' own conception of reform (or, more properly, their lack of one), the vigour of black resistance, and, after the Afrikaner nationalist coalition began to fragment with the creation of the Conservative Party in 1982, the danger of defections by government supporters to the right. The stalemate was broken by Botha's successor as president and leader of the National Party, F.W. de Klerk. De Klerk's dramatic initiatives of February 1990 and beyond transformed reform from a substitute for negotiation to its embodiment.

Although unbanning liberation movements, dismantling apartheid's foundations and embracing the politics of negotiation were particularly radical departures, this second phase of reform did not represent a complete break with the past. If the National Party under de Klerk was prepared to countenance an end to the formal apparatus of white minority rule, the continued security and prosperity

of whites as a group were still the primary goals of reform. These were sought at first in an explicitly group context, and when this failed, in the context of power-sharing among political parties and the protection of individual liberties.

Given the contradictions and ambiguities which seem inevitably to attach themselves to projects of reform, it is never easy to reach conclusive verdicts on their meaning and significance. Reform in South Africa is no exception. The process can be criticised within its own terms of reference because it could not secure legitimacy without sacrificing white control. From an alternative perspective, reform and reformers can be criticised precisely for setting these terms of reference, rather than opting much earlier for more boldly inclusive initiatives.

These are valid criticisms but other considerations have to be taken into account in any balanced interpretation, especially a comparative one. In some ways what is most impressive about reform in South Africa is the way in which from 1979 onwards how much change did take place -- in the nature of the National Party and what it claimed to represent, in the assumptions and blueprints which had dictated policy up to that point, in the machinery of government -- without the political process being overwhelmed either by revolution or reaction. That the National Party managed to maintain itself in power with regular mandates from the white electorate, and make the transition from being the centrepiece of a popular ethnic coalition to a more inclusive party with much more secular and managerial claims to authority can be explained only partly by the self-imposed limits it set to reform. Of central importance to the maintenance of reform as a plausible popular position were a powerful range of human,

material and ideological resources that could be deployed to that end. This discussion of reform in South Africa now turns to these resources.

The Phenomenon of 'Verligtheid'

The importance of verligtheid and the verligtes who professed it are widely acknowledged in discussions of reform in South Africa.⁸ Verligtes represent a number of characteristics which deeply mark Afrikaner Nationalism and assert its singularity in wider Western political discourse.

Firstly, Afrikaner Nationalists have been unusually predisposed to ground their movement and the policies it professes in firm moral principles. It has been an essential part of the Nationalists' self-image that they are part of Western political traditions, but the ethnic exclusivism on which the movement was mobilised, and the assumptions of white supremacy gave little purchase for this claim. For this reason, at least since the 1950s, a feature of Afrikaner Nationalism has been the search for some bridge of principle to give meaning to Afrikaner identity beyond the parochial and selfish, and, for less exalted purposes, to defuse international criticism and claim membership of 'the West'. In any case, Afrikaners display a high degree of adherence to formal religious belief and practice, in Christian denominations notable for rigorous and comprehensive moral codes. It would be surprising if this salient characteristic did not make itself felt in their corporate public discourse. These dispositions represented both a source of verligtheid and a resource for verligtes.

Secondly, apartheid was a radical political doctrine of movement and change, of uprooting and re-deploying, of tearing down and building up. Its proponents claimed unusual

far-sightedness and clarity of thought in analysing social and political problems and devising radical, activist policies to forestall them. They created an atmosphere of change and movement and set easily-verifiable standards of success or failure, of which the extent of black urbanisation is a good example. In these respects apartheid invited modification, revision and even wholesale re-making of the kind with which the verligtes were associated.

Apartheid was a comprehensive and interlocking (though admittedly ramshackle) system of theories embracing anthropology, sociology, politics, theology and philosophy. As a result, logical and practical flaws in one major component threatened the whole edifice. Improbabilities in the theory and practice of creating 'homelands' for coloureds and Indians exemplifies this point.

Thirdly, the verligtes emphasised the importance of fully-allegiant opposition within the National Party. Where conditions of political association are less deterministic and more flexible than in white South Africa, dissatisfied elements like the verligtes might switch their party allegiance or withdraw from politics altogether. Neither was seen as an option by the vast majority of dissatisfied Nationalists. Whether prompted by moral doubts, changing class allegiances or intellectual perception of the failures of past policies, they remained convinced that the group basis of allegiances and rights was inviolable, and that unless Afrikaners retained control, they in particular and everyone else in general would be engulfed in chaos. The question of 'survival', central as it is to Afrikaner political identity, is usually understood in wider than purely parochial terms. It is commonplace for Afrikaner politicians to claim that they not only have a right to maintain control of their own destiny, but a duty to manage

and control the forces of change in the interest of other 'groups' too.

The first two of these factors ensured that questioning, doubt, pragmatism and revisionist ideas would have significant purchase within Afrikaner Nationalism. The third would ensure that these things would be kept within very strict limits. Verligtes did not constitute a movement, nor did they have a comprehensive programme of reform which would fundamentally alter the basis and distribution of rights in South Africa, at no time did they dominate the National Party. Verligtes included industrialists who knew that economic growth could not be sustained without better utilisation of a trained black work force, generals who were converted to reform by modern theories of counter-insurgency, churchmen for whom apartheid violated universal religious truths,⁹ diplomats who had first-hand knowledge of the dangers of isolation, export farmers concerned at the effects of sanctions and social scientists who could not ignore the evidence of apartheid's failure. Slabbert summarises this diverse constituency in the judgement, "...An Afrikaner verligte is an individual who experiences conflict between the parochial demands of the particular organisation within which he finds himself and the more universal demands of his occupation".¹⁰ Two things united the various strands. The first was a rejection of the incoherence and drift which overtook both party and government in the late 1970s under the laissez-faire management of Vorster and the desire to recapture the sense of purpose, energy and direction which animated the movement under Verwoerd, but on a more defensible and viable set of principles and policies. The second was a refusal to abandon a belief in the group basis of politics, and the conviction that Afrikaners must retain leadership and even control. These 'non-negotiables' signalled the belief that the National Party was the only

viable instrument of reform, and even those verligtes who wanted the party purged of its reactionary and populist elements could not contemplate wholesale re-constitution or dissolution of the nationalist alliance.

Verligtes performed a number of political roles in the context of reform. They headed off any substantial potential defection of disillusioned Afrikaner intellectuals to the Progressive Reform Party; they gave sympathetic Western audiences some justification for resisting economic sanctions and they helped broaden the base of support for the government by attracting English-speaking voters. Overall, Verligtes helped create an atmosphere of questioning and an expectation of change which they did not fill with a well-articulated alternative vision. The resulting vacuum of policy and ideology was filled to some extent by another important group with whom the verligtes overlapped to some extent.

The Advance of the Technocrats

One of the most striking aspects of Afrikaner social advance under Nationalist rule was the expansion of higher education. This substantial investment yielded a return in a generation of technocrats well-trained in disciplines of all kinds. They had been brought up to regard the state and the public service as the natural preserve of their ethnic group and their technicist expertise could be put to resolving the contradictions of achieving reform and retaining control. They also relished the prospect of material advancement, status and influence which co-option into the state apparatus represented. This was a generation coming of age in the same way as the generation which accompanied Gorbachev to power was the "...first entirely Soviet generation of formally educated men .. ready to take

control".¹¹ As bureaucrats and planners, both civilian and military, this self-confident generation could re-model constitutions, relocate industries, redefine the status of urban Africans, and upgrade township services while projecting a sophisticated counter-insurgency campaign into them.

The Language of Reform

The availability of these educated and trained cadres greatly facilitated another dimension of the reform process. This was the development of a language of reform in which policies were co-ordinated, articulated and legitimised. According to Posel this new "language of legitimation" had three principal elements, "technocratic rationality", "total strategy" and "free enterprise".¹² Free enterprise was promoted in pragmatic terms as the best means of creating a black middle-class to be a bulwark against 'communism'. Total strategy put security at the heart of all government policy and fused its military and civil dimensions. Technocratic rationality sought to redefine the parameters of politics, and to place as wide a range as possible of government activity within the realm of 'technical' choice dictated by incontestable facts, such as 'economic realities'. This applied particularly to problems engendered by apartheid policies.

Properly problems of political control, they are presented as if merely technical ones, the solutions to which can and should be non-'ideological' and therefore non-contestable. Such solutions depend on the findings of economic, academic or military 'experts', rather than as the outcome of partisan and inexpert 'political' debate.¹³ (emphases in the original).

In this way, opponents (right or left) of government reforms could be branded as ideologically purblind and the government could pass itself off as the medium through which the impersonal forces of modernisation worked. This assiduously cultivated language came to dominate the (white) political agenda from the late 1970s onwards, despite the efforts of liberals to expose it. However, it was of course the servant and not the master of the interests of those in power. Giliomee's acute observation of an earlier phase in Nationalist policy¹⁴ is equally telling in this context: "The terminology of the 'progressive' or 'liberal' Nationalists had conquered the National Party, or rather the party had conquered the terminology".¹⁵

The language of reform was more like a smokescreen than an inspirational standard, borne by the party to lead it and the country forward. Behind this smokescreen, the disparate reformist forces could be kept together, opponents and allies alike could be kept in the dark about the future directions of reform and above all, the fact that the reform process lacked a rationale of essential values grounded in beliefs about human rights and individual freedoms could be concealed. As such, it was an invaluable asset in ensuring the durability and flexibility of reform, but at the same time helped rob it of direction and purpose.

The Sources of Reform

The verligtes and technocrats demonstrated that there were substantial resources within the National Party's support base committed to at least a partial vision of reform. The actual sources from which the reformers' ideas were taken, however, revealed how fragmentary, confused and limited this vision was. To some extent reformers picked up ideas from the repertoire of liberal criticism. Stadler notes in

particular the influence of the Study Project on Christianity in an Apartheid Society (SPROCAS) whose reports were published in the early 1970s.¹⁶ In their assumption of continuing white control, but with increasing black pressure dissipated in 'organised and regulated bargaining' between black and white, the SPROCAS reports and studies talked a language which could be assimilated and adapted to the reformers' agenda. According to Stadler:

.. the ideas running through the commission have subsequently, in a curious and quite typically South African way, been diluted into the orthodoxy of the reform movement which overtook government thinking during the late 1970s.¹⁷

It is not unusual for reformers to adopt opponents' ideas and policies in this way. Less common, but a striking feature of reform in South Africa is the appeal to the authority of academics, especially foreign ones. Among those whose ideas are credited with influencing reform policies in South Africa are Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphart, American political scientist Samuel Huntington, and French strategic theorist Andre Beaufre. Whether or not these (and other) Western scholars actually intended the use made of their writings by South African reformers would be difficult to establish conclusively and in any case is probably something of a side issue. What is important to establish is the degree of opportunistic attribution which marked the South African government's efforts at reform. The extent to which these efforts called forth attempts to give them intellectual respectability is quite remarkable, especially the need to validate the government's policy choices as scientifically necessary.

To the extent that there has been an attempt to give some kind of intellectual respectability to the Government's

constitutional guidelines, it has been to fall back on the logic and theory of consociational democracy. The underlying philosophy of the President's Council's recommendations, as well as the Government's constitutional guidelines represents the crudest bastardisation imaginable of the logic of consociational democracy. It is academically too embarrassing to take seriously.¹⁸

Despite such scathing appraisals as Slabbert's, the search for scholarly pedigree was a persistent and pervasive aspect of reform policies in South Africa.

Reform as Co-option

If the sources of reform reflected the confusions and uncertainties of the process, at least some consistency of purpose was bestowed by the aspiration to attract support from other constituencies. The aim was not only to cultivate but even in some instances to create them. The challenge was to convince others to participate in a system which would continue to be controlled by Afrikaner Nationalists. This limited campaign to broaden the legitimacy of the state had four principal fronts; the English-speaking business community; English-speaking voters; coloured and Indian communities and urban blacks.

Although by the late 1970s, there was a substantial Afrikaner entrepreneurial and corporate class, much of South Africa's business still lay under the control of English-speaking managers and shareholders. The relationship between English business and Afrikaner Nationalist governments was never cordial, sometimes critical, but on the whole accommodative. As in the aftermath of Soweto, the government increasingly cast about for allies and ideologies to help resolve its legitimisation and accumulation crises, corporate

South Africa (which was independently becoming involved in the crisis through such media as the Urban Foundation) seemed a likely candidate for partnership. If economic growth and anti-communism were to be priorities, then free enterprise would be at the heart of the government's modernising message.

The influence of monetarism, following conservative victories in British, American and German elections around the turn of the decade, began to make itself felt in South Africa and to push in the same direction. In addition, a crucial aspect of the government's reform programme was to de-racialise the central state. The idea was to devolve as many as possible of its interventionist functions outward and downward to local and private agencies, diffusing power and giving greater play to market forces.¹⁹

This two-pronged reconstruction, if successful, removes the national state as a primary site of struggle, creates a complex of institutions through which political demands are mediated, and reduces the reliance on coercive methods.²⁰

It was against this kind of background, that high profile meetings took place between P.W.Botha and South Africa's most prominent business leaders at the Carlton Hotel (November 1979) and the Good Hope Centre (November 1981). Their aims apart from judicious symbolic grand-standing were to discuss how government and business could jointly sponsor economic growth. The tangible results of the meetings (another took place in Pretoria in November 1986) were meagre however. It soon became clear that while business was being offered a consultative role, if its suggestions for political reform went beyond the very narrow limits of what the government deemed acceptable to its primary

constituencies, they would not be acted on. As Slabbert put it:

The two parties seem to be talking past one another. When the government talks about free enterprise, it talks about it as operating within present political structures. When the private sector talks about it, it talks about it as operating in a situation where the present structures have been reformed.²¹

Another bone of contention was the government's failure to trim the numbers employed in the public service and in general to curb the prerogatives and power of what businessmen saw as a grotesquely over-inflated bureaucracy. As resistance and repression increased in the years of the states of emergency, businessmen (at least some of them) sought ways of distancing themselves from government, rather than coming closer.

The second source of co-opted support for government reforms was the votes of English-speakers. The (white) general election of 1981 saw the first serious erosion of Afrikaner support for the National Party. From that point, the government faced the stark choice of abandoning reform altogether or compensating for the losses by attracting English votes. Success in the referendum on the proposals for the tricameral constitution in 1983 vindicated the latter strategy, and English-speakers became an increasingly important component of National Party support thereafter. The relationship between reform and the English vote was not absolutely simple however. Another strategy was to denigrate the Progressive Federal Party's policies as representing a security risk. In general to play up the security issue was highlighted as much as reform, if not more, in white electoral contests. In this way, the security fears of the

English-speakers as well as their hopes of reform were influential in co-opting them to the government side.

The extension of political rights to Indian and coloured people offered another potential opportunity for co-option. Two imperatives were at work here. Firstly, one of apartheid's most serious illogicalities was to extend the idea of territorial self-determination to Indians and coloureds. By the late 1970s (and especially after the report of the Theron Commission on the political future of the coloured people) only the most diehard verkrampies were prepared to defend this idea. The second imperative was the government's need for allies and legitimacy.

The 1983 constitution purported to extend political rights to Indians and coloureds in a form of power-sharing, but it had the following shortcomings. It was not negotiated between representative leaders and the 'groups' which were to be enfranchised were not consulted. The apartheid classifications were built into the system and the balance of institutional power between the three chambers was firmly in favour of whites. The electoral procedures for choosing the state president, his extensive powers to define 'own' and 'general' affairs and his powers to nominate members of the deadlock-breaking President's Council confirmed that the constitution would preside over the elaboration, not the abolition of apartheid. Rather than power-sharing in any legitimate sense of the word, the tricameral system was intended to shift the administration of apartheid on to coloured and Indian leaders, offering them only the distribution of patronage in their own communities and a spurious, symbolic, equality with white legislators as a base for their legitimacy.

The tricameral constitution triggered off a new wave of resistance, exemplified above all by the creation of the United Democratic front (UDF). Despite this and the derisory polls in siege-like conditions which characterised tricameral elections, the government managed to find enough parties and people to run the tricameral institutions. Even this partial success has however been undermined by cynical floor-crossing and office-brokering (especially in the Indian chamber, the House of Delegates), by outright corruption, and the transparent inability of Indian and coloured politicians to be an effective, loyal opposition.

Efforts to co-opt black support were even less successful. Two principal strategies of reform were attempted here. The first was to extend economic and social rights to black residents. The granting of trade union rights came into this category, as did more secure residential status and property rights to those who already had the right to live in urban areas. Another arm of policy was to encourage the growth of the informal sector of the economy through deregulation. Together, these changes were intended to create a black middle class, which at worst would divide and diffuse black opposition to apartheid, and at best would encourage outright support for the system among blacks. To create a politically rightless, black middle class would have been a self-defeating objective however, and the strategy included a political element as well. The omission of blacks from the tricameral system showed just how little was on offer though, and potential black allies of the government had to be content with the homelands or the Black Local Authorities (BLAs) which purported to address the problem of political rights for urban blacks. Like the tricameral system itself, this 'reform' sparked off greatly intensified resistance. In fact, more than any other measure the BLAs offered an exposed flank of the government's reform

programme in the black townships, where various strands of resistance (the UDF the most important) could take the initiative from the government. The vulnerability of all co-opted blacks was made cruelly plain in this campaign of intensified resistance.

The dilemmas of co-option were made plain also in the relationship between the government's reformers and Chief Buthelezi. In Buthelezi and Inkatha, the government had a potential partner who was vehemently anti-radical and was willing to operate, up to a point, within the framework of grand apartheid, if only for the purposes of transcending it. Buthelezi and his advisors were energetic and resourceful in devising strategies and schemes of constitutional reform which would protect white minority interests, but also be able to attract (they calculated), substantial black support and international backing. Even the elaborate consociational formulae and restrictive constitutional safeguards which they produced went far further than the government calculated its supporters would tolerate. The narrow and conservative parameters of reform which ensured the rejection of Buthelezi's proposals left him without the political space needed to make a moderate anti-apartheid alternative to the ANC credible on a national basis.

The Agencies of Reform

It is perhaps in the agencies of reform that the South African experience makes its clearest impression and reveals its essential characteristics. The agencies of reform were the institutions and strategies used by the government to promote and where necessary to enforce its conception of political change on all other parties. Under the conditions of ideological confusion and struggle which characterised

the South African state and the Afrikaner Nationalist alliance during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, neither the underlying values (if any) nor the goals and directions, nor even at times the limits, of reform were well defined. Even the designations 'reformer' or 'reformist' became quite unclear, especially with regard to the government.

P.W. Botha's administration (1978-89) quite quickly lost the character of a reforming administration in any strong sense -- in the sense of seizing the initiative with a comprehensive and well-integrated programme of reform which would alter the terrain and agenda of politics, and the configuration of competing alliances. Ceasing to be 'reformist' in this autonomous, self-generating sense, it became not much more than the meeting point of reformist and conservative pressures -- from below, from within, from outside -- claiming to occupy the ground of the former, while more or less permanently conceding territory to the latter. In this situation of contradiction and confusion, the government came to rely a good deal on semantic and conceptual manipulation, and on changing the forms and structures of its rule while remaining opaque or inarticulate on the true range and trajectory of reform.

In this situation of deception and confusion, the meaning of reform has to be read from the agencies used to implement it in the absence of a coherent and articulate philosophy of change. In a sense, the medium became the message. The principal medium of change was the restructuring and elaboration of the framework of decision-making and administration by which the country was governed.²² The political space to do this was guaranteed by the long-established accretion of authoritarian powers and practices by which apartheid was imposed and black opposition

repressed, and which could be turned to other purposes. It was enhanced by the availability of the wide range of state and parastatal institutions at the government's disposal. It was further underwritten by the marked tendency of many whites to be loyal to the government, even when they disagreed with it, a phenomenon strengthened by the transformation of the Nationalists's support base into a predominantly bourgeois and petty-bourgeois one, with far less appetite for activism and militance.

The effect of this restructuring was to insulate the government on two fronts. Firstly, by streamlining and centralising the decision-making process, the government insulated the most important aspects of its working from electoral pressures and public scrutiny. These effects were achieved by reducing, regrouping and greatly extending the role of departmental committees, in whose ranks a 'new ruling class' of high-ranking military officers and bureaucrats became prominent. The co-ordinating role of the State Security Council and of P.W. Botha's personal rule were also part of this process. Essential adjuncts to this kind of restructuring were the language of modernisation and rational/technical imperatives which allegedly superseded the 'outmoded' agenda of racial categories and ethnic particularism, and the militarisation of white society around the security model provided for in the total onslaught/total strategy ideology. In these various ways, but particularly by redefining all important areas of policy in terms of security, the government sought to insulate itself from the kind of widespread discontent among whites which would threaten not only decomposition, but complete fragmentation of its support base.

Secondly, the state's coercive powers were used to insulate the government and the reform programme from being

overwhelmed by the black resistance which showed rapidly, indeed exponentially, increasing powers of recuperation after the post-Soweto repression. When reform in the shape of industrial rights, more flexible influx control, the new constitution and BLAs failed to secure broader-based legitimacy for the state, a second front was opened. This involved a bottom-up approach to black political rights and material advancement in which central government functions were decentralised to second and third tier institutions. At this level they were to be depoliticised, translated into the neutral and technical administration of needs, rather than conflict and bargaining over interests and aspirations. Cobbett et al saw the purpose of this spatial devolution as:

..to prevent national democratic forces from mobilising against the central state and, should they come to control that state .. to prevent them from effectively using it to bring about radical social and economic changes. ²³

This combination of force and restructuring ensured that the government was never in any danger of losing control, but it could not completely insulate its efforts to gain legitimacy. Black resistance and the growth of the white right in the 1980s set such contradictory limits to its freedom of action that in the stalemate towards the end of the decade, it became clear that a clear-cut choice would have to be made between the risks of a bold initiative and those of continued piecemeal and incoherent attempts manoeuvre within these limits. Aided considerably by the changes in world politics which removed the Soviet Union as a factor in the balance of forces between the government and the ANC, President de Klerk opted for the former in his dramatic reforms of February 1990.

REFORM UNIONISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Nothing like the considerable resources which Afrikaner Nationalist reformers were able to draw upon were available to their Ulster Unionist counterparts. Indeed, to an extent that is highly significant for any understanding of Northern Ireland's recent history, the policy of reform in response to Unionism's various crises is associated with one man, Captain Terence O'Neill.²⁴ The period of civil rights agitation, reform and Protestant backlash has, ever since, been associated with his name. 'O'Neillism' came to stand, according to political persuasion, either for the tragically unfulfilled promise of moderation, or for the hypocrisy of gestural reform without substance, or the treacherous appeasement of implacable enemies. Not surprisingly, views of O'Neill's personal qualities vary too. In one account he was "... a colourless figure who was largely a mouthpiece for the technocrats in the civil service".²⁵ In another, he was, "courageous", and "bold",²⁶ while a third describes him as "...an Olympian, a man of destiny who found the company of world leaders more convivial than those (sic) of his colleagues".²⁷

The questions raised by O'Neill's personal qualities and the nature of his political style are important in explaining the nature of reform and the decay of the Unionist alliance, and these issues will be explored below. But in a sense the emphasis on the individual and the personal is in this case faute de mieux. Resort to this kind of explanation highlights the weakness of reform as a movement, and points to the absence of any substantial political force or alliance of forces which could propel a determined political leader forward, and sustain him. This does not mean to say that there was no support for reform in the community. But the substantial support which O'Neill enjoyed was diffuse

and disjointed. Most importantly, it was largely outside the Unionist Party, and he could not mould that party into an instrument of reform, however defined. The nature of the support for reform, the nature of the Unionist Party, and O'Neill's relationship with that party, were particularly influential in determining the nature and fate of reform in Northern Ireland in the years of crisis between 1963 and 1969, and those of collapse between 1969 and 1972.

Most accounts of 'O'Neillism' agree that the reforms were of two kinds. The first consisted of an emphasis on economic growth to be achieved by Keynesian interventions in the economy. The second concerned an altered disposition towards the Roman Catholic minority in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, expressed mainly in symbolic meetings and gestures, and a rhetoric of inclusive citizenship.

The elements of O'Neill's economic reforms included planning by experts, infrastructural development and generous incentives aimed at encouraging corporations to set up production in Northern Ireland. These things required an overhaul of government structures, including the setting up of a new Ministry of Development, which took responsibilities away from lower tiers of government. Another aspect was a tacit leaning towards corporatism, symbolised by the government's recognition of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (ICTU), after which "...the way was open for the establishment of an employer-labour-government economic council".²⁸ O'Neill's revisionist attitudes to community relations and the Irish Republic were much less tangible, but on a population in which sensitivity to political symbolism is raised to an art form, the impact of his visits to Catholic schools, meetings with clergy and especially his

meetings with the prime minister of the republic, Sean Lemass, should not be underestimated.

Although the principal versions of the O'Neill years all cite the two-dimensional quality of his reforms, they do not, for the most part, explore the connections between them. For the most part they are content to imply that both were complementary parts of a programme of modernisation, whose aims were to arrest Northern Ireland's economic decline and to normalise political life there in patterns of cleavage and integration common to the rest of western Europe. One exception to this is the account given by Bew et al which begins by effectively denying that there was a connection between the two -- "O'Neill's economic policies bore no relation to intercommunal relations. Their raison d'être lay only in political conflicts within the Protestant bloc".²⁹ In this account, the Unionists faced two distinct problems; the defection of Protestant working-class voters in Belfast to the NILP as a result of increasing unemployment and, "...developing a policy to meet what was perceived as a transformation, or potential transformation, of traditional London-Belfast relations" This development was threatened by the return of a Labour government at Westminster in 1964.³⁰ The basis of this interpretation rests firstly on chronology. The economic reforms preceded O'Neill's gestures of goodwill towards the Catholic community and their relative success emboldened him to undertake them. Secondly, the weakness of the gestures and their contextual ambiguity are explained by their purpose as sops to the British government. They were unaccompanied by any expressed intention of secularising the state machine and alternated with statements of bedrock Unionist belief.

This interpretation is not entirely convincing. The authors note themselves that the Keynesian policies espoused by

O'Neill to win back Protestant workers from the NILP increased Northern Ireland's dependence on the British exchequer. This suggests linkage between the two problems which Bew et al initially wish to keep apart, since increased dependence meant increased vulnerability to the unsympathetic administration which Wilson's was thought to be. Perhaps sensing this, the authors later modify their position;

O'Neill's position was not, of course, wholly determined by the Wilson problem. The strategy of reformist gestures accorded with his earlier outflanking of the NILP, and was accompanied by an ideology of modernisation.³¹

On the other hand, the strength of this version is that it satisfactorily explains why O'Neill saw fit to embark on reforms at a time when Catholic parliamentary opposition was in an advanced state of decay, when peaceful extra-parliamentary opposition had not mobilised, and when the paramilitary opposition was undergoing a painfully protracted metamorphosis. O'Neill offered nothing of any political substance to Catholics because they were not among his principal concerns. These were to re-organise the Protestant class alliance, and to defend the Unionists' autonomy from Britain by making minimal gestural concessions towards the minority. What was principally on offer to Catholics was a share in economic growth and the patronisingly confident prediction that materialism would re-orient their political aspirations from Irish nationalism, and dissipate the undesirable consequences (in O'Neill's insulting view) of their religion's social teachings. It did not escape Catholics' notice that O'Neill's reforms did not confront their grievances directly. Instead, his gestures produced a heady mixture of

emboldening and embittering effects which were influential in igniting the Civil Rights Movement.

The first phase of reform began with O'Neill's succession as prime minister and leader of the Unionist Party in 1963, and ended as the confrontation between the Civil Rights Movement, the government and Protestant ultras intensified after October 1968. The dominant features of this period were the intra-Unionist dynamics of reform, and the concern with an external audience, the British government.

The second phase began with the government's banning and the RUC's violent dispersal of a Civil Rights Association march in Derry on October 5, 1968. It ended with the resignation of O'Neill in April 1969. The principal features of this phase were revealed in the rapid erosion of the Northern Ireland government's autonomy from British scrutiny and direction, and the weakness of forces committed to reform, especially within the Unionist Party.

The police violence at the march in Derry was televised and widely reported, calling forth public and parliamentary concern in Britain on an unprecedented scale. Further marches were met by Protestant counter-demonstrations. Against this background, O'Neill persuaded the Unionist parliamentary party to accept a five-point reform plan, this time directly addressing some (though by no means all) of Catholics' grievances. The proposals included the appointment of an ombudsman, the replacement of the gerrymandered Londonderry council, and reform of the allocation of local authority housing.³² O'Neill frankly admitted that pressure from Britain made reform imperative, sparking off a serious public clash with his minister of home affairs, William Craig, over rival interpretations of Westminster's powers under the Government of Ireland Act.

This resulted in Craig's dismissal on 11 December.³³ Resignations from O'Neill's government, backbench unrest and continuing turmoil in the streets forced O'Neill to call an election (24 February) which was effectively a vote of confidence on his conception of Northern Ireland's relationship with Britain, and on his reform policies.

The later O'Neill period showed that there was strong resistance to reform in the Unionist Party and no coherent internal constituency to sustain it. Indeed one important feature of the period was that O'Neill appeared better supported outside his party than in it. He attracted into politics numbers of people who were 'unionist' in the sense that they supported the link with Britain, but who wanted no part of the sectarianism populism, the links with the Orange Order and all the atavistic baggage of traditional militant Unionism. Like the more moderate civil rights supporters, they wanted to see Northern Ireland become more British, in the sense of doing away with overt discrimination and repressive security laws. These newcomers were, for the most part, not assimilated into the Unionist Party.³⁴ They were concentrated initially in the New Ulster Movement (NUM). This largely middle-class body was formed on 6 February 1969, immediately after O'Neill called the general election. The movement's immediate purpose was to support pro-O'Neill candidates, and sponsor them -- as 'unofficial' Unionists -- where none were standing. Within a short time, the movement had 2 500 members.³⁵

The result of the election was a disappointment to supporters of O'Neill, and especially after his resignation on 28 April 1969, it seemed clear that there could be no future for a left wing in the Unionist Party. Having failed to become a base for the transformation of the Unionist Party, the NUM became the point of departure for the

avowedly non-sectarian Alliance Party which was founded in April 1970. The subsequent career of the NUM as a pamphleteering pressure group and think tank reveals the limitations as a political force of the reform movement inspired by O'Neill. The NUM was an early advocate of power-sharing³⁶ and of creating a just society in Northern Ireland to diminish the appeal of Irish nationalism. Many Catholics, in the collective view of the NUM, wanted a united Ireland as the most practical means of getting justice for 'the minority';

If this justice could be obtained by other means -- by a restructuring of institutions in the North so as to guarantee a sharing of power -- would this not alter the case for a united Ireland?.³⁷

Although power-sharing was a radical idea in the Northern Ireland context, the NUM's other positions³⁸ were decidedly conservative. The movement's expressed concerns were to ward off radical change threatened by Irish republicanism or socialism, as much, if not more than to pursue justice in society for its own sake. This message became clearer as the conflict deepened and the isolation of the NUM -- and of all self-styled moderates -- became more marked. By 1975, just before its dissolution, the NUM was warning that although the Provisional IRA seemed the greater contemporary danger, "Marxist republicans" posed a long term threat unless economic prosperity was promoted and popular discontent defused. Referring to these Marxist republicans, the NUM warned;

It is known that contacts exist between them and groups on the 'Protestant side' who are expressing disillusionment with their political representatives. The possibility of the growth of 'non-sectarian politics' in a revolutionary form is one which cannot be

ignored ... The community movement needs to be encouraged and guided in channels of constructive cooperation with state agencies, and a politically directed overall plan of social development. Otherwise it could easily become the organisational basis of destructive revolution. 39

Notwithstanding the implausibility of the middle-class nightmare which it expresses, this passage confirms the impression of the NUM's conservatism and isolation. It illustrates how the NUM's ideology set itself against every single popular position -- sectarian populism, Irish nationalism, socialism -- in Northern Ireland's politics, thus revealing the narrow base and range of the forces called into politics by O'Neill's reforms. The NUM was transformed from a support group for reform within the Unionist Party, to the prototype for reforming Unionism outside the party. The nature of the Alliance Party, "...a province-wide organisation of moderate people which is firm on the constitution"⁴⁰ reveals how inhospitable the Unionist Party, with its sectarian populist base was to any conception of ginger group tactics, of being led to the left from above by reformers, no matter how conservative and "...firm on the constitution" they might be.

The February 1969 Stormont election also revealed the nature and limits of the reform forces. On 9 December 1968, O'Neill broadcast to the people of Northern Ireland on the theme "Ulster at the Crossroads".⁴¹ He appealed for support for reform initiatives and for an end to civil unrest, stressing that both government and opposition at Westminster had made it clear that pressure would be applied to keep up the momentum. The response to the broadcast suggested that O'Neill enjoyed substantial support. 150 000 people sent letters or telegrams of support, and in the following week, 120 000 returned coupons printed in a Belfast newspaper

expressing support for him.⁴² Less than two months later, after a challenge to his leadership by 12 backbench Unionists, O'Neill called the election.

The period between dissolution and polling day was marked by competition in several constituencies over nomination contests between pro-and anti-O'Neill candidates. The conflicts were deepened by the fact that the Unionist Party did not exercise central control over constituency associations, and there was no central vetting of candidates. In the event, only one sitting anti-O'Neill member was ousted from the nomination,⁴³ and on other Unionist side the election was fought with a confusing list of candidates. There were 'official' and 'unofficial' pro-O'Neill candidates, and 'official' and 'unofficial' anti-O'Neill candidates.

Overall, the Unionist Party won 39 seats in the 52 seat parliament, an increase of two over the previous parliament.⁴⁴ The most interesting contests however were intra-Unionist. Flackes computes O'Neill's support as 27 (24 official and three unofficial), while anti-O'Neill members were ten in number, with two unclear in their attitude to the prime minister (both official). O'Neill himself saw his majority in the immediate aftermath of the election as being "perhaps eleven".⁴⁵ In all, 17 unofficial Unionist candidates contested seats, 16 pro-and one anti-O'Neill,⁴⁶ while the Rev. Ian Paisley's Protestant Unionist Party contested five seats. In this way, there were 22 contests between official and other sorts of Unionist. In only three of these did an unofficial candidate win, all of them pro-O'Neill.

It is not easy to generalise about the social bases of pro-and anti-O'Neill voting patterns in the 1969 election. Bew

et al discuss the significance of the election in these terms, noting that since anti-O'Neill tallies were most substantial along the border and in working-class Belfast;

It has been argued in explanation that since these regions contained a concentration of deprived Protestants, and since the opposition to O'Neill was frequently classist in rhetoric, class antagonism underlay popular preference for O'Neill's opponents.⁴⁷

The authors go on to criticise this account, pointing out that these are interface districts with large Catholic concentrations. They argue that it was in these areas where autonomy from Westminster ("central bourgeois control" as they put it) was most crucial, in order to allow the practices which kept Unionists in power locally. These areas were "bastions of populism" and "most sensitive to its erosion". Bew et al prefer this interpretation to one based on class, claiming it is simpler and better. Perhaps simplest of all would be to acknowledge that the two were inevitably interlinked. It would not be surprising if Protestants who felt vulnerable in the face of Catholic self-assertiveness, who were convinced that the Civil Rights campaign was merely a contemporary variation on the traditional republican assault on the state and who saw every gesture of conciliation to Catholics as evidence of betrayal of Protestant solidarity on which alone the foundations of the state rested, expressed their fears and frustrations in opposition to those whose education, social position, and comparative wealth allowed them to accommodate or even ignore Catholic advance.

Despite this interpretation, O'Neillite Unionists did quite well in both working-class and rural seats.⁴⁸ All ten of the anti-O'Neill dissidents were opposed by supporters of the

prime minister. The aggregate vote for the ten was 65 187, and their reformist opponents grossed 53 190. Despite this strong showing, and although three were held to majorities of less than a thousand, only one of them was unseated by an O'Neillite.⁴⁹

The pro-O'Neill candidates did best in straight fights against anti-O'Neill antagonists, or in three-cornered contests with either a liberal or an NILP candidate. They did worst in two kinds of constituency; where there was a large block of Catholic voters, and candidates of identifiably republican or left-civil rights sympathies stood,⁵⁰ or in border counties where, even if there was no block of Catholic voters strong enough to threaten a Unionist seat in the constituency itself, the demographic situation in the county as a whole tended to parity,⁵¹ or there was an outright Catholic majority.⁵²

These generalisations notwithstanding, the results of the election and what Bew et al describe as "...the collapse of O'Neillism as a popular position"⁵³ do not lend themselves to ready-made explanation. The contrasting fortunes of reformist candidates in two neighbouring Belfast constituencies illustrate the difficulties of interpretation. Shankill and Woodvale are predominantly Protestant constituencies in North Belfast. If anything, Shankill could have been expected to be more hard-line. It is the site of the essential Protestant community of populist rhetoric and mythology, and, given that the Shankill road borders the Catholic Falls road area along its length, it is one of the urban 'shatter-zones' of cyclical popular disorder. Despite the contiguity of the two constituencies, Woodvale contains more middle-class voters.

Both Woodvale and Shankill had as official Unionist candidates, charismatic, hard-line, anti-O'Neill figures. Yet despite these similarities, the pro-O'Neill unofficial Unionists fared quite differently in these seats. In Shankill, the pro-O'Neill vote was 71% of the anti-O'Neill tally, while in Woodvale the unofficial Unionist could gather only 44.3% of the total gained by his rival for Protestant votes.⁵⁴

As a pointer to the future, perhaps the most significant result was in the rural Co. Antrim seat of Bannside. Here, O'Neill was forced to defend his seat for the first time in his political career. He was opposed by the Rev. Ian Paisley who ran him a close second, taking 39% of the vote against O'Neill's 44%. This was a significantly higher percentage than his five Protestant Unionist colleagues who managed an average of 28% in the constituencies they contested.⁵⁵

In some respects, the 1969 election gave the Unionists the worst of all worlds. The reformists did well enough to suggest that it would be difficult to reconstitute Unionism's traditional base, yet they did not do well enough to suggest that theirs was the way of the future. If there was a popular mandate for reform among Unionist voters it was a slim one and anyone who pressed on with a vigorous and far-reaching programme of reform (especially if identifiably under pressure from the British to do so), would run the risk of his opponents resorting to direct action if they felt that their constitutionally expressed wishes were being flouted. Paisley's success at Bannside made it clear that there was a dynamic focus for discontented Protestants outside the Unionist Party, one which could mobilise class resentments as well as traditional loyalist sentiments. The divisions in Unionism had been well and truly advertised for the benefit of the Civil Rights Movement, republicans and

traditional nationalists, all of whom could be relied on to push harder in taking advantage of an increasingly fragile ruling coalition. The British too, would draw their own conclusions from these divisions.

Although O'Neill had a mandate of sorts, in that he had a majority in the parliamentary party, his was a position from which he could only lose, not gain strength. On 28 February the parliamentary party confirmed him in the leadership, voting twenty-three for him, one against, with one abstention.⁵⁶ But this was more probably a reflection of the unreadiness of any rival than a reflection of strong belief in O'Neill. A truer reflection was given by the Unionist Standing Committee's confirmation of O'Neill's leadership by only 183 votes to 116 (7 March),⁵⁷ and the Unionist Council's vote of confidence in him by 338 votes to 263, a margin of only 75 (31 March).⁵⁸

On the previous day, there had been an even more ominous sign, an explosion which destroyed an electricity sub-station in a suburb of Belfast. This, the first serious act of sabotage in recent years, was followed by several more explosions towards the end of April. The target for the later blasts was Belfast's water supply, and by 25 April, the major pipelines had been destroyed and the city was experiencing severe shortages. It was generally believed at the time that the IRA was responsible and many blamed the government for the deteriorating security situation.⁵⁹ On Wednesday 23 April, the Unionist Parliamentary Party voted on the introduction of universal adult suffrage in local elections. The majority in favour, 28 to 22,⁶⁰ was an indication of the fragility of the majority for reform in the party. A further blow to O'Neill was the resignation on this issue of the minister of agriculture (and O'Neill's cousin) Major James Chichester-Clark, who said he was not

against the reform of the franchise, "in principle", but was against, "its timing".

O'Neill's authority had been damaged by the inconclusive election result, the opposition to him at all levels in his own party, and by the street demonstrations of Protestant ultras. The civil rights campaign continued, the occasion of repeated confrontations between police, activists, and Protestant counter-demonstrators. The explosions, followed by the vote on the suffrage and Clark's resignation, gave him the final push, and he resigned on 2 April.

O'Neillism had five principal elements. Firstly, the O'Neill years saw the creation of an atmosphere of modernisation in Northern Ireland. Planning and the role of experts were stressed in the pursuit of secular issues like attracting new investment. O'Neill accepted that there were new challenges to Unionism -- first the NILP and then the Civil Rights Movement -- which called for new responses, and he also accepted that there were new opportunities, like those presented by the outward policy of the new Irish premier Sean Lemass. That O'Neill and Lemass appeared to be complementary figures did not escape the hostile notice of Irish republicans and Protestant ultras. O'Neill himself protested that these secular economic and social issues did not detract from the importance of the constitutional question, the defence of which, he claimed, had been "..the motivation of my political life..",⁶¹ but that only by dealing with them could the constitution be effectively defended. This meant (especially after the civil rights campaign gathered momentum) making the state more legitimate in the eyes of Ulster Catholics and the British government, which in turn meant incorporating Catholics more effectively into an expanding economy.

The second element in O'Neillism was the centralising of decision-making in the prime minister's hands, and those of the bureaucrats close to him. When O'Neill met Lemass early in 1965, he told only Craig of his cabinet colleagues, and that only the night before. To make a unilateral decision on such an emotive issue violated the Unionists' conception of intra-party democracy, and many of them never trusted him again.

Thirdly, O'Neill violated the myth of Unionist solidarity by being willing to condemn enemies within, as well as without. Some of his sharpest denunciations were reserved for Paisley, a favourite theme being to brand him as a fascist.

To those of us who remember the thirties, the pattern is horribly familiar. The contempt for established authority, the crude and unthinking intolerance; the emphasis on monster processions and rallies; the appeal to perverted forms of patriotism: each and every one of these things has its parallel in the rise of the Nazis to power.⁶²

Craig too came in for stinging rebukes;

There are, I know, today some so-called loyalists who talk of independence from Britain -- who seem to want a kind of Protestant Sinn Fein ..they are lunatics who would set a course along a road which could lead only at the end to an all-Ireland republic. They are not loyalists, but disloyalists; disloyal to Britain, disloyal to the constitution, disloyal to the Crown, disloyal -- if they are in public life -- to the solemn oaths they have sworn to Her Majesty the Queen⁶³

It is important to note that O'Neill simply could not grasp that the 'disloyalty' to which he was referring was the very foundation of the state, a badge of honour which many of his

opponents were only too willing to claim. Of course, O'Neill was only attacking those, particularly Paisley, who themselves so bitterly denounced him. But he gave the unmistakable impression that while he was willing to consort with priests and the leader of a hostile foreign state, while he was prepared to appease enemies within Northern Ireland and their supporters outside (including the British government), he reacted with venom and scorn to the true loyalists who protested at his departures from the traditional pieties of Unionism. Paisley was especially adept at portraying himself as a much harried and even persecuted figure, a potent reversal of the truth which redoubled in its effects when he was imprisoned in 1966 and 1969. The impression that O'Neill cared little for Unionist solidarity was heightened by his strategy of appealing over the heads of the party and the Orange Order in 'presidential' broadcasts to the whole population.

Fourthly, O'Neill's character imparted a strong flavour to the reform Unionism which bore his name. He was aloof and aristocratic of bearing without appreciating the need for bonhomie, for the backslapping and arm-twisting which are useful for a party leader in a democracy, especially one at the head of a movement with strong populist overtones. He did not conceal his contempt for the wilder fringes of Unionism and although he was a member of the Orange Order, his appearances at its rituals reflected (if photographs are anything to go by⁶⁴) an ambiguous forbearance quite without enthusiasm. He was equally unconcealed about what he saw as the low standard of most Unionist parliamentarians. Of his predecessor, Lord Brookeborough, a backwoods Fermanagh squire who had come to personify all that was unyielding about traditional Unionism, O'Neill said;

He was good company and a good raconteur and those who met him imagined that he was

relaxing away from his desk. What they didn't realise was that there was no desk.⁶⁵

But the unreconstructed Brookeborough had been present at the creation of the Northern Ireland state, and was particularly influential in the setting up of the 'B' Specials. What the modernising O'Neill didn't realise was how important such things remained in his new world of ring roads, investment incentives and local government restructuring. One thing O'Neill did have in common with Brookeborough was that he was a landowner in a party dominated by business interests. When, shortly after taking power as premier, O'Neill imposed a code of conduct for ministers covering clashes between their official duties and business interests, he was the only member of the cabinet with no such interests at all. This did not endear him to his colleagues, and when he used the code to dismiss one of his most persistent political critics, Harry West, the minister of agriculture, the incident seemed to combine ruthless intrigue with snobbish high-mindedness.

In the end there was something proconsular about O'Neill, something alien to the instincts and tastes of Ulstermen. This deficiency might not have been fatal if he had been a dynamic and charismatic character who could have strenuously worked to create a new constituency composed of moderate Protestants and Catholics, who would have to be persuaded that they had full future in a reformed Northern Ireland, and could safely abandon Irish nationalism. But O'Neill was patronising to the point of insult about Catholic aspirations. Even if he had been more vigorous and determined in trying to create a new support base, the problems of the constitution and Irish nationalism lay squarely across the road ahead.

Lastly, O'Neill's conception of Unionism was a peculiarly British one. It had very strong metropolitan reference points which can be clearly seen in the extract from the 'Ulster at the Crossroads' speech, quoted above. It was to the Crown, to the British constitution and to British citizenship which he appealed, not the frontier notion of loyalism, by which the whole Protestant community stood in solidarity and in a narrow contractual relationship to Britain. Modernising and metropolitan imperatives meant that Unionism would have to be recast if the essential goal of resisting absorption into a united Ireland were to be maintained.

These features of reform Unionism violated basic traditional premises. Above all, reform violated the mythic status of Unionism as a movement embodying a whole community in which there were no enemies and which practised fraternity and democracy, at least in the sense that all had their place and all had their say, irrespective of rank and social position. In another sense, O'Neillism subverted this notion of community by offering to open up Unionism to anyone who subscribed to the allegiances and values of British citizenship. Although O'Neill was not personally associated with the idea of allowing Catholics to join the Unionist Party, followers of his were. The implication of his general approach was that you did not need to be an Orangeman, or even a Protestant, to be a loyal British subject and depended on not to harbour a desire for a united Ireland. Since Unionism had never been exclusively about the connection with Britain but involved also the ethnic identity of Ulster Protestants, opening up Unionism seemed ethnic betrayal as well as misguided policy.

1. De Tocqueville is often cited in works on the recent history of Northern Ireland and South Africa. See for instance, Arthur, P. The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland London, Longman (1980) p.107, and Slabbert, F. van Zyl, The System and the Struggle: Reform, Revolt and Reaction in South Africa Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball (1989) pp.69-70.

2. Lee, J. Ireland 1912-85 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1989) p.411.

3. Richard Rose defines an 'ultra' as "an individual who supports a particular definition of an existing regime so strongly that he is willing to break laws, or even take up arms, to recall it to its 'true' ways". He invokes Rhodesia (in its revolt against Crown authority) and Algerian 'pieds noirs' in his discussion. See Rose, R. Governing Without Consensus: an Irish Perspective London, Faber and Faber (1971) p.33.

4. Despite the very important differences in status and political rights enjoyed by Northern Ireland Catholics and South African blacks, there was one equally important similarity in the conceptions of democracy with which they confronted their respective regimes. It was that an undivided Irish and an undivided South African people should be the sole legitimate bearers of the right of self-determination.

5. On reform in South Africa see; Charney, C. "Restructuring White Politics: the Transformations of the National Party" South African Review 2 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1983) pp.142-154 (especially pp.148-153); Cobbett, W. et al "South Africa's Regional Political Economy: A Critical Analysis of Reform Strategy in the 1980s" South African Review 3 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1986) pp.137-168 (another version is published in Frankel, P. and others [eds.] State, Resistance and Change in South Africa Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1988) pp.19-51); Giliomee, H. (1) The Parting of the Ways Cape Town, David Philip (1982) (2) "Apartheid, Verligtheid and Liberalism" in Butler, J. et al (eds.) Democratic Liberalism in South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987) pp.363-83 (3) "Afrikaner Politics, 1977-87: From Afrikaner Nationalist Rule to Central State Hegemony" in Brewer (ed.) Can South Africa Survive? Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1989) pp.108-135; Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. From Apartheid to Nation-Building; Glaser, D. "Ruling Groups and Reform in the Mid-1980s" South African Review IV Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1987); Greenberg, S. (1) "Ideological Struggles Within the South African State", in Marks, S. and Trapido, S. (eds.) The Politics of Race, Class and Nation London, Longman (1987) pp.389-417; (2) Legitimizing the Illegitimate: States, Markets and Resistance in South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1987); Murray, M. South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny London, Verso Books (1987) pp.59-127; Rich, P. B. "Doctrines of 'Change' in South Africa" in Brewer, Can South Africa Survive? pp.281-

311; Posel, D. "The Language of Domination, 1978-83" in Marks and Trapido (eds.) The Politics of Race, Class, and Nation pp.419-44; Price, R. The Apartheid State in Crisis Oxford, Oxford University Press (1991) pp.79-98; Slabbert, F. van Zyl, (1) "Sham Reform and Conflict Regulation in a Divided Society" Journal of Asian and African Studies 18 (1-2) 1983, pp.34-48 (2) The System and the Struggle Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball (1989) especially pp.69-78 and pp.101-150; Stadler, A. The Political Economy of Modern South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987) pp.1-9 and pp.161-184.

6. Minogue, K. "Revolution, Tradition and Political Continuity" in King, P. and Parekh, B.C. (eds.) Politics and Experience Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1968) pp.283-308, at pp.287-8.

7. Taylor, R. "Between Apartheid and Democracy: the South African Election of 1989" in South African Review 5 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1989) pp.56-67, at p.57.

8. See especially Giliomee, "Apartheid, Verligtheid and Liberalism" in Butler and others (eds.), Democratic Liberalism in South Africa.

9. See for instance, Loubser, J.A. The Apartheid Bible: A Critical Review of Racial Theology in South Africa Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman (1987) especially pp.147-163.

10. Slabbert, "Afrikaner Nationalism, White Politics and Political Change in South Africa" in Thompson, L.M. and Butler, J. (eds.) Change in Contemporary South Africa Berkeley, University of California Press (1975) pp.3-18 at pp.13-14.

11. Walker, M. The Waking Giant London, Michael Joseph (1986) pp.32-3. Walker also makes the point that Western observers often make the mistake of thinking that Russian reformers are liberals (p.35). Giliomee ("Apartheid, Verligtheid and Liberalism") makes the analytical distinctions between verligtes and liberals clear. See especially pp.382-3.

12. Posel, "The Language of Domination" p.420

13. Posel, "The Language of Domination" p.421.

14. The phase marking a shift from white supremacy to self-determination and decolonisation as a rationale for grand apartheid.

15. Giliomee, "Apartheid, Verligtheid, and Liberalism" p.371.

16. Stadler, A. "Anxious Radicals; Spro-cas and the Apartheid Society" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 2 (1) October 1975.

17. Stadler, The Political Economy of Modern South Africa p.163.

18. Slabbert, "Sham Reform and Conflict Regulation" p.43.

19. On the importance of intellectuals' contribution to this

'denial of the political' see Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate pp.146-149. See also Giliomee, "Apartheid, Verligtheid and Liberalism".

20. Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate p.190.

21. Quoted in Giliomee, The Parting of the Ways p.134.

22. On this see Grundy, K. The Militarization of South African Politics Oxford, Oxford University Press (1988). See especially pp.34-57, "Centralization of State Power and the Centrality of the Security Establishment".

23. Cobbett et al "A Critical Analysis of the South African State's Reform Strategies in the 1980s" in Frankel, P. et al (eds.) State, Resistance and Change in South Africa Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1988) p.44.

24. Captain O'Neill (1914-1989) came of a landowning family in County Antrim. He became an Ulster Unionist MP in 1946, and minister of finance in the Northern Ireland government in 1956. He was prime minister from 1963 until his resignation in April 1969. Thereafter he was awarded a life peerage as Lord O'Neill of the Maine. See O'Neill, T. The Autobiography of Terence O'Neill London, Hart-Davis (1972). See also the entry in Flackes, Northern Ireland: A Political Directory 1968-88 pp. 210-211.

25. Farrell, M. Northern Ireland: The Orange State London, Pluto Press (1976) p.228.

26. Lee, Ireland 1912-1985 p.416.

27. Arthur, The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland p.86.

28. Farrell, The Orange State p.229.

29. Bew, P. et al The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972 Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979) p.156.

30. Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland p.190.

31. Bew, et al The State in Northern Ireland p.193.

32. See Wallace, M. British Government in Northern Ireland Newton Abbott, David and Charles (1982) p.30.

33. Wallace, British Government in Northern Ireland p.31.

34. Part of the problem was that at least some of them were Catholics, and while there was no official ban on Catholics joining the party, it was clear that an unofficial bar existed. This was a measure of how unreformable the party appeared to reformers at the time. See "Oliver Napier: Alliance Leader" Hibernia 2.11. 1973.

35. Deutsch, R. and Magowan, V. Northern Ireland: A Chronology of Events Vol. I Belfast, Blackstaff (1973). On p.20 the launching of the NUM on 6.2.69 is reported. See also, Wilson, B. The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland: a Study of a Bi-Confessional Party M.Sc. thesis, University of Strathclyde (1976) p.18.

36. See the NUM publication The Reform of Stormont (June

1971).

37. NUM Two Irelands or One? (March 1972) p.7.

38. See The Way Forward (November 1971); Violence and Northern Ireland (June 1972); Tribalism and Christianity in Ireland (1973); A Challenge to Statesmanship (June 1975).

39. A Challenge to Statesmanship p.8.

40. Wilson, The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland p.23.

41. For the text, see Ulster at the Crossroads: the Speeches of the Rt. Honourable Captain Terence O'Neill London, Faber and Faber (1972). It is also reproduced in O'Neill, Autobiography pp.145-9. For O'Neill's account of the broadcast see Autobiography pp.107-9.

42. Belfast Telegraph 16.11.68. O'Neill calculated that he had, "...the equivalent, by British standards, of five million messages of support". This comparative claim is revealing of O'Neill's cast of mind, and of a general tendency in Northern Ireland habits of thought.

43. He was captain Austin Ardill, who was ousted from the nomination for the Carrick constituency by Mrs. Anne Dickson. See Belfast Telegraph 8.2.69.

44. For the results and biographical details of the candidates, see Flackes, W.D. and Elliot, S. Northern Ireland: a Political Directory Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1989) pp.303-310. See also Boal, F.W. and Buchanan, R.H. "The 1969 Northern Ireland General Election" Irish Geography Vol. 6 (1969).

45. Belfast Telegraph 26.2.69

46. The exception was Austin Ardill in Carrick, whose loss of the nomination to a pro-O'Neill campaigner is noted above.

47. Bew et al, The State in Northern Ireland pp.194-6. In their discussion of the results, these authors mistakenly refer to only two unofficial victories, missing out the Belfast Clifton result.

48. For instance, a strongly pro-O'Neill cabinet minister comfortably won the Victoria constituency in East Belfast and a pro-O'Neill candidate did well in Shankill (West Belfast) against Desmond Boal, the most charismatic and class-conscious of the anti-O'Neill dissidents. These two seats contained the highest proportion of working-class Protestant voters in the city. In North Derry, a constituency which contained the area where the Burntollet ambush took place, a pro-O'Neill candidate reduced the hardline sitting member's majority to 115. For figures see Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory pp.303-310.

49. Caldwell in Belfast Willowfield.

50. See for instance East Down; electorate 18 320; percentage poll, 86,); Faulkner, B. (Unionist) 8 136: McGrady, E. (National Democratic Party), 6 427: Rowan-

Hamilton, Lt. Col. D. (Unofficial Unionist), 1 248. The National Democratic Party was a republican splinter group. Brian Faulkner was minister of commerce under O'Neill and one of his long-term critics. He resigned in January 1969 over the appointment of the Cameron Commission to investigate the causes of violence. This was generally regarded as a reform, and an indication of the government's willingness (at the behest of the British) to redress grievances.

51. See for instance Mid-Armagh: Electorate, 15 901; Percentage poll, 80.8; Stronge, J. (Unionist), 6 932; Toman, C. (Peoples Democracy) 3 551; McGowan, I. (Unofficial Unionist), 2 321. Mid-Armagh borders on the Irish Republic and is the interface between the strongly Protestant and Orange north Armagh, and the equally fiercely republican south Armagh.

52. See for instance, Eniskillen and Lisnaskea, two Unionist seats in County Fermanagh which has a Catholic majority and, geographically, is a salient, jutting far into the Irish Republic. Eniskillen; Electorate 11 695; Percentage Poll, 87.0; West, H. (Unionist), 4 891; Egan, B. (Peoples Democracy), 2 784; Archdale, B. (Unofficial Unionist), 2 418. Lisnaskea; Electorate, 10 506; Percentage Poll, 88.0; Brooke, Captain J. (Unionist), 4 974; Henderson, Major J. (Unofficial Unionist), 2 702; Carey, M. (Peoples Democracy), 1 726.

53. Bew, et al The State in Northern Ireland p.194.

54. Shankill; electorate 18 816; Percentage poll 72%; Boal, D. (Unionist), 6 384; Walsh, H. (Unofficial Unionist), 4 545; Overend, D. (NILP), 1 997. Woodvale; Electorate 19 984; Percentage poll 72.2%; McQuade, J. (Unionist) 7 299; Boyd, W.R. (NILP) 3 878; Bell, L. (Unofficial Unionist, 3 231.

55. Rose, Governing Without Consensus p.226.

56. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. I, p.21.

57. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: A Chronology of Events Vol. I, p.22.

58. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. I, p.23.

59. The blasts were later revealed to be the work of Protestant extremists.

60. On this occasion members of the upper house, the Senate, voted as well as the 39 members who had been elected in the 24 February election. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: A Chronology of Events Vol. I, p.25.

61. See O'Neill's speech on the motion "That this House, conscious of the benefits accruing to Northern Ireland as an integral part of the UK, affirms once more its determination to maintain that status", debated at Stormont on Wednesday 28 January 1969. Belfast Newsletter 30.1.69.

62. Mooney, E. and Pollak, A. Paisley Swords, Co. Dublin,

Poolbeg Press (1986) pp.132-3.

63. This attack came in the "Ulster at the Crossroads" broadcast, only 48 hours before O'Neill sacked Craig. For the text see O'Neill, Autobiography p.147.

64. There is a particularly good example in Rose, Governing Without Consensus facing p.232.

65. O'Neill, Autobiography p.47.

PART THREE

THE DECAY OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST AND AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITIONS

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BREAK UP OF THE AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITION

From 1978 onwards, the National Party and the government drawn from its ranks were able to use the resources which control of the South African state since 1948 had bequeathed to them, to mark out, occupy and defend a popular political position under the rubric of 'reform'. Nothing about this position was very well defined. As a result, the durability of the government's position, its resilience in reproducing (and transmuting) reform as a mobilising and legitimising agent, cannot to be seen in terms of the politics of conviction. It is rather in the government's ability to manipulate and control its considerable assets that the continuing viability of what became a self-consciously centrist position should be seen. More specifically, the National Party and the government could successfully practise defence-in-depth and damage limitation against right-wing challenge and its own crumbling support base, because it had superior resources and could claim that its own strategies for ensuring Afrikaner survival and prosperity were more likely to prevail than those of its right-wing rivals. It was these things, rather than any very profound difference in principle and conviction, that characterised the dissolution of Afrikaner unity.

Despite the assets and resources which could be deployed behind reform, it was not possible to reproduce in the name of change the same coalition of interests and conviction which had sustained Afrikaner Nationalism since 1948. Loss

of privilege, class resentment, anger at the betrayal of ethnic identity, fear for the future and deep racial prejudices were all provoked by the changing orientations and strategies of the National Party.¹ These reactions made themselves felt across the full range of political, economic, social and religious organisations whose interlocking functions and membership gave overt expression to the Afrikaner nationalist coalition. This discussion will focus on three concentrations of discontent, the Conservative Party, white trade unions, and paramilitary groups.²

THE WHITE RIGHT FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1989

The Conservative Party

The origins of the Conservative Party (CP) lay in a schism within the parliamentary caucus of the National Party. From the moment of its creation, the CP never lost this schismatic quality, and the principal focus of its concern lay in the aspiration to capture power in the white parliament. It remained schismatic in the sense that its understanding of the issues and conflicts in contemporary South African politics focussed purely on the reconversion or defeat of heretics who had betrayed the Verwoerdian faith. Refusing to acknowledge the force of economic and social change (or simply ignorant of it), the CP was fixated on the narrow, enclosed world of white parliamentary politics. Insofar as it interested itself in anything outside this concern, the fraternal struggle (broedertwis) for control of the vanguard organisations of Afrikaner Nationalism represented the boundary of its horizons.

From the mid-1970s, the National Party operated in two dimensions; containing and responding to black aspirations in their newly and forcefully restated forms of mobilisation and resistance, and competing with white forces on the left and right for the mandate to represent white interests. By contrast, the CP admitted only the importance of competing for power in the white parliament, denying the need for any policy other than that of forcing blacks back into the Verwoerdian mould of grand apartheid.

The occasion for the split which led to the founding of the CP was provided by the issue of power-sharing between white, coloured and Indian 'groups', which was developed in the National Party's constitutional proposals between 1977 and 1982. A group of National Party MPs objected to the idea of power-sharing in general and in particular the proposition that whites, coloureds and Indians would each have a separate chamber in a single parliament, rather than three separate parliaments as previously suggested.³ Twenty-two of them, headed by the Transvaal leader of the National Party Dr. Andries Treurnicht, voted against a motion of confidence in P.W. Botha, the prime minister, in the parliamentary caucus on 23 February 1982. On 27 February, a confrontation took place in the controlling body of the Transvaal National Party, the upshot of which was the confirmation of Botha's hold on the party and the departure of Treurnicht and his supporters to form the Conservative Party.⁴

Two factors place these events in broader context. The first is the substantial gains made by the right-wing HNP in the white general election of 1981. Although it did not win a seat, the HNP increased its share of the vote from 3% to 14% overall. More important than the HNP's total vote were its much larger percentages in several rural and industrial seats in the Transvaal⁵ which pointed to noticeable

defections of Afrikaner voters to the right.⁶ The HNP's success suggested that there was a growing constituency of white voters dissatisfied with the idea of reform, and with their declining living standards.⁷

Secondly, the struggle for power which installed P.W. Botha as leader of the National Party and prime minister had marked regional overtones. Botha's chief rival was Transvaal leader of the party, Connie Mulder, who was also minister of information. Under Mulder, the Department of Information conducted its own covert foreign policy in the atmosphere of departmental intrigue and empire-building encouraged by the laissez-faire leadership of B.J. Vorster. Departmental, regional and ideological rivalries fed on the revelations of corruption and abuse of power in the Department of Information (which collectively became known as 'Muldergate') and turned the struggle for Vorster's succession into a particularly bitter one. Botha's triumph was not only a victory for reform (at least in the sense of pragmatism) but also for the Cape over the Transvaal. Of the MPs who formed the CP with Treurnicht, only one was not from the Transvaal;

Provincial loyalties -- as expressed through provincial congresses -- have always been significant within the NP and the shift of power and influence at the time probably contributed to the break-away of a number of the seventeen parliamentarians and to the growing dissatisfaction among many party members.⁸

The Conservative Party was the principal institutional expression of the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism and the more general one of white supremacy. It was in this narrowly-defined role that it sought the support of the white electorate. A profile and summary of the support that

it in fact obtained, suggests that although the CP's goal was to take power in the white parliament, a secondary effect, that of altering the balance and the dynamics of reform and reaction within the National Party was more important.

Although by-elections⁹ played an important part in establishing the CP as an important force in white politics, keeping it more or less continuously in the public (and international) eye between 1982 and de Klerk's reforms of 1990, the party faced only two substantial tests of its support in these years, the white general elections of 1987 and 1989.

In the general election of May 1987,¹⁰ the CP won 22 seats out of 166, all of them in the Transvaal. Its 26% share of the vote translated into only 13% of the seats, although this was enough to make it the official opposition thanks to the ground lost by the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). Although this was an auspicious enough performance for a first general election appearance, the CP would have done even better had it not been opposed in 75 of the 126 seats it contested by the HNP, which nevertheless failed to win a seat. This split in the right-wing vote allowed the NP to capture eight seats (six in the Transvaal and two in the Orange Free State) in which the combined vote for right-wing parties exceeded its own. The combined share of the vote for the right wing was 30%, against 52% for the NP which won 123 (or 74%) of the seats.

Support for the CP was concentrated in the rural regions of the Transvaal where 16 of its 22 seats were situated. Of the other six, four were urban and two mixed. Its support was also concentrated among the 2.8 million Afrikaners who make up 60% of the white population.¹¹ Although no seats were won

either by the HNP or the CP in the Orange Free State, the combined right-wing vote in that province was 42% (NP, 56%). In the Transvaal, the right-wing share was 38% and that of the NP, 48%. An analysis of 'possible wins',¹² which added constituencies where the right-wing vote was over 40% to the eight where the combined vote already exceeded the NP's, came to a total of 40, 23 in the Transvaal (including 16 urban seats) and 12 in the Orange Free State.

In the white general election of September 1989, the CP increased its total of seats to 39 by winning 17 constituencies from the NP. Nine of the new acquisitions were in the Transvaal, six in the Orange Free State, and two in the Cape. Although this represented a modest breakout from the Transvaal heartland, the Cape and Free State seats involved very narrow margins of victory. The CP's advance reflected a serious underachievement for the party which had hoped for something like the 60 or so seats which Bekker and Grobbelaar designated as possible wins in the aftermath of the 1987 election. Although the CP's percentage of the vote rose to 31.2%, this was scarcely more than the total for the combined right in 1987, a very poor performance considering that the HNP polled only 0.2% in 1989. Indeed if the virtual collapse of the HNP is discounted, the CP made scarcely any ground at all. Once again the CP's support was overwhelmingly concentrated in the Afrikaner population; only 7% of English speakers voted for it.

Municipal elections in white areas (October 1988) provided a further test of CP support, but commentators found the results difficult to interpret.¹³ The CP consolidated its position in urban areas in the Transvaal without either making serious inroads into the Orange Free state, or breaking out into the Cape and Natal. In addition, its successes brought with them the difficult task of putting

its policies of racial segregation into practice against resistance from blacks and business interests. Like many extremist parties, it became vulnerable to the compromises of actually wielding power.

The 1989 general election demonstrated that after seven years of existence the phenomenon of a right wing parliamentary opposition, based largely on a restated Afrikaner Nationalism, had established itself as a permanent and significant force in white politics.¹⁴ The election also demonstrated that the Conservative Party was now the sole institutional expression of this parliamentary opposition, and that support for it had stabilised at a point well short of any threat to unseat the government or completely derail its halting progress towards reform and negotiation. This meant that the CP could count on the allegiance of three out of ten white voters, with this support concentrated heavily in the northern provinces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

The social composition of the CP's support remained consistently concentrated among three principal groups.¹⁵ The first source was blue collar workers, who were particularly vulnerable to recession, black advancement and the ending of statutory protection for whites in employment. Secondly, the vulnerability of certain agricultural interests helps explain the CP's domination of the Transvaal's rural areas, especially in the north. Security problems on the borders of black-ruled states and 'homelands' (ranging from stock theft to guerrilla incursions) often left a declining population of white farmers at odds with government policies. A combination of drought (to which the northern provinces were particularly susceptible) and the fiscal crisis of the South African state left farmers perpetually dissatisfied with the level

of government aid in the 1980s. Another source of agricultural disaffection was concentrated among smaller farmers and those producing for the domestic maize market (again, concentrated in the Transvaal and the Free State) who believed that government policies favoured the larger, export-producing farmers of the Cape (fruit) and Natal (sugar). A third occupational group attracted to the CP could be found among lower-level bureaucrats, especially those in apartheid bureaucracies¹⁶ and in the security forces.

To some extent these social groups gave a solid base to the CP, to which could be added ideological zealots of white supremacy, or Afrikaner Nationalism (or both), irrespective of social background. Although this guaranteed a well-nigh irreducible minimum of support -- reflected in the results of the 1987 and 1989 elections -- certain features of the CP's social base made advance beyond this minimum difficult to achieve.

Firstly, the classes which were attracted to the CP did not constitute a coherent set of social interests out of which a new ruling coalition and ideological hegemony might be constructed. It might be objected that the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition which narrowly scraped into office in 1948 was constructed out of similarly (in some respects identically) unpromising material. Indeed some commentators have seen parallels between the old United Party's decline into incoherence before 1948 and the NP's groping to find new directions and identities in a time of social change and upheaval. Clearly, leading Conservatives hoped that just as conviction politics, intensive grassroots organisation and a base-line of ethnic identity could mobilise diverse social interests behind the National Party, and be moulded by it into a relatively compact ruling alliance which rescued

white interests from the United Party's incoherence and drift, so the Conservative Party, forty years later, could put the same forces to work and save whites from a governing party which had apparently abandoned all conviction and distinct identity.

In 1948 however, Afrikaner farmers and workers constituted a numerous bloc in a white social formation and polity whose dominance was scarcely challenged. By the 1980s, not only were these groups in steep numerical decline, but white dominance was increasingly under threat, and white interests were increasingly dependent on an accommodation with blacks. From being the vanguard of an upwardly mobile ethnic coalition in an autonomous white polity between the 1940s and the 1970s, the Afrikaner workers and farmers who supported the Conservative Party in the 1980s moved to the political margins, as social and political change increasingly emphasised the fusion of black and white politics, and shifted the centre of white interests in an accommodationist direction. The bureaucrats who composed the third principal occupational segment of the CP's support did not fit into this pattern. Far from declining in numbers, public servants became ever more numerous, but despite the fears and insecurities that the prospect of accommodation with blacks forced on them, the inroads that the CP could make on public service loyalties were limited by the direct possibilities of patronage which the government could deploy on this source of its support.

The Conservative Party never came to terms with the fact that the interests of its constituency had become exposed as sectional interests, that its conception of a generalised white interest (perhaps any conception of a generalised white interest) was no longer comprehensible. Although it was seen by some analysts as the expression of class forces,

a number of formidable prohibitions prevented the Conservative Party from choosing a fully articulated class identity. Firstly, the CP's philosophy of politics regards nations as the organic and eternal building blocks of social life, the elemental axes of conflict and cooperation. This world view is simply incompatible with any developed sense of class conflict or identity. Any wholehearted assumption of either of these would in any case only divide the white polity and hasten the final demise of its claims to autonomy.

Secondly, even those conflicts within Afrikaner Nationalism which are susceptible to explanation in terms of class are cut across and confused in expression by questions of regional identity. Thirdly, there is no strong tradition in Afrikaner Nationalism of independent working-class identity and action, given the early and thorough incorporation of working-class elements into 'national' structures like the Christian National trade union movement. Fourthly, at a strictly pragmatic level, the HNP seemed to provide CP strategists with an exemplary lesson on the fate of any party which tried to give Afrikaner Nationalism a specifically and emphatically working-class dimension.

The HNP also provided other salutary lessons. The first was that although Afrikaner Nationalism retained its mobilising force, too exclusive and rigid a conceptualisation of its meaning would be counter-productive in an increasingly secular society in which the question of a wider white identity had electoral resonance. For instance, Conservative Party strategists rejected the HNP's insistence on primacy, if not supremacy, for the Afrikaans language, as archaic and unworkable, an electoral millstone. The second was that the terminology and rhetoric of bigotry and crude racial supremacy would be likely to repel as many voters as it

attracted. The sectarian interests of whites and Afrikaners should as a result be articulated in a discourse of internationally respected values, like nationhood and self-determination, even if these were no more than ideological code words for the racism favoured by many on the white right.

As a result of these precautions, the CP had to position itself somewhere between the equivocations of the National Party, and the class rhetoric, the crude racism and ethnic exclusivism of the HNP. Although it did successfully portray itself as a clear alternative to the National Party, the party's image was not without its own ambiguities. There could be no mistaking the clear note of reactionary populist resentment which emerged from the CP's supporters, the disaffected voice of declining, marginal social groups, prompted by their declining living standards, diminishing privileges, and vanished access to the policy-making process. The outrage and sense of betrayal that they expressed was not only at the advance of blacks, but also at the disappearance of Afrikaner Nationalism as a fraternal system in which, although power was unevenly distributed and authority bestowed in a hierarchical way, all cultural and occupational groups had an effective say.

Despite this, the CP could not merely be the party of the disaffected since its principal aim was to gain an electoral majority in the white population as a whole. Similarly, although its most powerful appeal was to Afrikaners who felt betrayed at the NP's dilution of the ethnic content of Afrikaner Nationalism, and the redefinition of Afrikaners as a 'group', rather than a nation or volk, the CP's ambition of ruling through the white parliament could no longer be achieved by Afrikaners alone, and it could not afford the complete alienation of English speakers.

For these reasons, although the Conservative Party was the party of class resentment and Afrikaner Nationalism, it could not allow these personae to define and dominate it. Some sort of solution was achieved by becoming the party of apartheid in its full Verwoerdian orthodoxy.

If the Conservative Party's social base was to some extent out of harmony with its parliamentary ambitions, these same constitutional methods and expectations were sometimes difficult to keep in step with broader political developments. The CP's breakaway from the parliamentary National Party was only one aspect of the fragmentation of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition. The paramilitary, religious, cultural and industrial bodies which made up the extra-parliamentary Afrikaner right posed problems of co-existence and leadership in the wider revolt against the transformation of the National Party.

Even within the narrow parliamentary domain, the question of the Conservative Party's relationship with the HNP had to be settled. Despite its discouraging record in actually winning parliamentary seats, the HNP proved demanding in the question of allocating seats between the parties of the right in the 1987 election, on the grounds that it deserved preferential treatment for its prescience in leaving the National Party earlier and conducting the struggle for apartheid orthodoxy alone for so long. Sensing that the HNP's sectional and sectarian appeal would be a liability in the long run, and would not survive determined competition from the Conservative Party, the latter's leadership decided to sacrifice a number of seats to intra-right competition in the 1987 election on the assumption (correctly, as the 1989 results proved) that the HNP's support would gravitate to its larger rival.

The groupings of the wider right posed different problems. The small, but intellectually influential cultural bodies which favoured radical partition and a much smaller Afrikaner homeland than the 'white South Africa' which was the basis for the CP's claim to self-determination, threatened to undermine the whole logic of the Conservatives' policies, although they were not in direct electoral competition with them. The paramilitaries (especially the AWB), on the other hand, were extremely useful mobilising vehicles for the cause of the right generally, but their penchant for direct, militant action, especially when it involved violence, clashed with the claims to respectability and propriety which were important to the Conservatives' electoral ambitions.

White Trade Unions

Exclusive trade unions, in the sense of bodies confined to white membership and defining industrial and wider political goals in racial terms, have been an important part of the Afrikaner nationalist alliance. The principal relationship of exclusive unionism however was originally, and remained, with the state rather than a particular political movement:

The particular conditions of exploitation on the mines made possible the emergence of an exclusive racist trade unionism recruited from mainly supervisory staff in conditions of rapid deskilling and dilution. These white mining unions became increasingly dependent upon state intervention to enforce colour bars and guarantee the jobs and conditions of their members. This strategy was later adopted by other groups of unskilled white workers, particularly in the state sector: on the railways and in the steel industry. Lacking political autonomy whilst they depended on the goodwill of the state, and antagonistic to black workers, these unions

played only a limited role in the wider trade union movement¹⁷

As Yudelman makes plain, the incorporation of white workers into a highly structured system of labour relations underwritten by the state took place early in South Africa's post-Union history. The development helped satisfy the state's legitimisation imperative; white workers would henceforth defend their interests as citizen-voters rather than (as the miners did in 1922) as worker-militants. The Broederbond's and the National Party's campaign for Christian National trade unionism as part of the wider movement of Afrikaner Nationalism took the incorporation one stage further by using trade unions to mobilise Afrikaner workers by fusing material interests with ethnic and racial identities. In this way, long term allegiances could be secured from the competitive vagaries of electoral contests fought solely on material issues. Despite some authorities' scepticism as to the degree of penetration specifically Christian National ideas achieved in the white working class, there is no doubt about the exclusive unions' enthusiasm for apartheid ideology:

For the exclusive industrial unions, the apartheid framework was the key to their trade-union practice and the survival of the white working class. In the absence of genuine job control, only the state, not industrial councils or apprenticeships, could bar the way to African economic advancement. Job reservations provided some protections, as did the suppression of African trade union organisation and political leaders, but only separate development promised ultimately to relieve the pressure on the bounded working class, to limit African proletarianisation. (emphasis added) ¹⁸

This judgement illustrates the central weakness of the white trade unions. They could fight -- as the white Mine Workers'

Union (MWU) did in the mid 1960s¹⁹ -- against attempts by employers and the government to dilute specific aspects of job reservation, but if apartheid failed, the specific privileges of the white workers could not be sustained, no matter how militant their opposition to their removal. The struggle over the colour bar in the mines in 1964-5 is an instructive case, because it provides the only significant example of white worker militancy in the period of Nationalist rule since 1948.

In August 1964, the mining employers, concerned as always with the margin between gold's fixed price and labour costs which constituted such a high proportion of total costs, introduced 'experimental' dilutions of the colour bar in several mines. They did so with the cooperation of the government and the MWU which at the time was complacent, co-opted, bureaucratic and protected.²⁰ Even before the experiment began, an action committee of dissatisfied members was in conflict with the union, and these rebels formed the nucleus of opposition to the changes. The struggle took place through wildcat strikes, court cases, threats to start a (white) workers' party to oppose the Nationalists, and in particular, intra-union struggles for control. Eventually, a government-appointed commission of enquiry, "...found some substance in the rebels' claims and in the name of 'industrial peace', the government decided that the experiment would endanger the colour bar and therefore should be terminated".²¹ Although the action committee took over the union and galvanised it into tougher negotiating positions, it reverted to 'bread and butter' issues, losing for the most part its wider political militancy.

This example of partly²² successful rank and file white worker action, took place at a time when the government's

confidence in the success of apartheid had not been dented, when the economy was booming, and when black resistance had been effectively crushed. Its target was an issue specific and internal to the gold industry, affecting the day to day conditions of white miners. By the late 1970s, when the government appeared ready, in the name of reform, to make a determined assault on job reservation, the circumstances had changed considerably. Confidence in apartheid was fast ebbing away, black resistance was on the agenda again, and the economy was in trouble. The question of black advancement was not solely an issue of mineowners' costs, but of the development of militant black trade unionism²³ and the state's legitimacy problems. In these changed conditions, white mineworkers went on strike in 1979, just before the publication of the first Wiehahn Report.²⁴ The issue was the appointment of three coloured men to vacant 'white' posts at the Okiep copper mine. Despite a great deal of militant rhetoric, during the strike, "...the African labour force kept the mines working, the Chamber maintained an intransigent position and the state merely looked on from a distance as the white miners trickled back to work".²⁵

The wider difficulties of the exclusive unions are illustrated by the experience of the South African Confederation of Labour (SACLA)²⁶ in the wake of the Wiehahn reforms. SACLA was founded in 1957 to act as a coordinating body of right wing unions, mainly representing non-salaried employees in government, quasi-government enterprises and on the mines. A powerful force in SACLA was the Coordinating Council of South African Trade Unions, founded in 1948 and with its roots in Christian National Trade Unionism;

From 1948 to the early 1970s, relations between the Coordinating Council and SACLA on the one hand, and the National Party and the Department of Labour on the other, were

extremely cordial. The Confederation's views were widely canvassed by state and NP officials. There were numerous instances of state intervention to secure concessions over wages, jobs, colour bars, etc.²⁷

When the government's reform programme began to phase out such corporatist arrangements, SACLA, as might be expected, became the focus of a rearguard of protest action. But its opposition was hampered by internal divisions, into those unions (mainly in the public service proper) which feared the total loss of their relationship with the government, and favoured a stance of 'loyal opposition' and those (like the MWU) which recognised no such restraints. Both moderates and militants disaffiliated as a result of these divisions (the MWU leaving and re-joining) diminishing SACLA's membership from 22 unions (representing 179 000 members) in 1980, to 14 unions (100 000 members) in 1982. The rapid growth of black trade union membership soon put these figures in perspective. By 1987, there were 109 racially mixed trade unions, 46 restricted to whites, 17 restricted to coloureds and Indians and 23 for blacks only. Altogether, 487 002 whites, 333 829 coloureds and Indians, and 823 620 blacks belonged to trade unions by 1987.²⁸

Throughout the 1980s, as white opposition to reform and support for the CP grew, the potential of white worker disaffection as a serious force on the right was noted.²⁹ As early as 1980, one authority predicted that as their special access to policy-making was withdrawn, white trade unions would "...be forced by a feeling of powerlessness and frustration to enter the political arena directly". Unions would be compelled to act in four ways, "...pressurise ministers; use their voting strength at the polls; start their own party; in a crisis, resort to legal and illegal strikes".³⁰ In fact, the white unions were not ruthlessly

and immediately cut out of the policy-making process. Although the government made it increasingly clear that the days of a special dispensation for white workers were over, the last vestiges of job reservation, especially in the mining industry, were only gradually and gingerly withdrawn.³¹ The prolongation of privileged access is underlined by the exclusion of the (black) National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) from the talks between the MWU and the Chamber of Mines on the removal of job reservation, which began in 1984;

The Chamber justified this on the grounds that the NUM had not existed at the time the white paper was issued and could not therefore be regarded as a party to the negotiations. The Chamber did, however, undertake to consult with (the) NUM on the issues. This was not to come about for several years.³²

The limits of such negotiations were clear however. The white unions could not prevent change, merely press for some form of job security assurances from the employers.

The response of white trade unions to the dissolution of their privileges was muted. Despite evidence, both social scientific³³ and anecdotal³⁴ of discontent, there was little sign of successful organisation to resist reform by direct industrial action and organisation. Despite rhetorical calls by both unionists and right-wing politicians for white worker unity, the separate identities of individual unions remained strong. From 1981 the MWU began recruiting workers outside the mines,³⁵ and by 1985 had established a presence in the nationalised steel corporation (ISCOR) and in the power stations of the state electricity monopoly (ESCOM). Despite denials by the MWU's leader that there had been, "...any specific attempt to organise strategic industries",³⁶

the spectre of a right-wing political strike appeared to some to be on the march;

If the majority of the white electorate could be persuaded to accept the dismantling of Apartheid and the establishment of some form of democracy, what good would that do if every pit and workshop and turbine were controlled by white workers loyal to the AWB, prepared to resist change with force and backed by at least the lower ranks of the police and the armed forces?³⁷

But although these apocalyptic visions gained wide currency³⁸ and there were indications of overlap between the AWB and the white unions,³⁹ there was little sign of planning for militant direct action to halt the erosion of the white workers' position. The probable reasons for this can be summarised as follows. Firstly the number of workers in white unions and the number of unions themselves were dwarfed by the numbers of black unions and their members in the 1980s. Not only were white workers outnumbered in the country as a whole, but even in plants and factories where whites were concentrated in significant numbers and strategic positions, they were usually outnumbered by increasingly organised black workers. Secondly, South African heavy industry, although concentrated to some extent in the northern and north-eastern provinces of the country, is still very widely dispersed, and white workers could not aspire to the critical mass of concentration which would make a political strike feasible.

Thirdly, as the disaffiliations from SACL A make clear, even right-wing white workers are sufficiently disunited between avowed die-hard racists and more pragmatic supporters of the government's reforms to make direct action difficult on any large scale. Fourthly, despite the deterioration of the

political and economic status of the white worker, prior to de Klerk's reforms of 1990 neither the security nor the political position of whites in general seemed immediately threatened. Finally, as Greenberg puts it, the changing nature of the white labour force weakened the unions; "...with the upward advance of European labour -- the emergence of managers, technicians and, indeed, 'aristocrats of labor' -- exclusive industrial unionism mattered a great deal less than it had done in earlier periods".⁴⁰

Paramilitary Organisations

The Voortrekkers' conflicts with powerful black tribes or nations and the long struggle of the Boers against British imperialism have provided the mythology of Afrikaner Nationalism with potent themes celebrating paramilitary organisation. The commandos of the Anglo-Boer War appropriately symbolise the right and duty of citizens to bear arms in defence of the volk, an idea which has been extensively incorporated into the military establishment of the South African state. There are aspects of this legacy which have been exploited by paramilitary organisations in the break up of the Afrikaner nationalist coalition,⁴¹ but there are also some qualifying and mitigating factors which should be noted.

Firstly, the failure of the 1914⁴² Rebellion to attract more than scattered and localised support suggests that the notion of romantic nationalist paramilitarism had limited purchase once South Africa was governed by unmistakably Afrikaner figures, no matter how apparently collusive with imperial interests. Secondly, although the Ossewa Brandwag⁴³ achieved an impressive degree of paramilitary mobilisation along proto-fascist lines, a power struggle between it and the National Party was resolved in the latter's favour. The

outcome cast the Afrikaner nationalist alliance in an unmistakably civilian, constitutional, and electoral mould, rather than one emphasising revolutionary and paramilitary forms of organisation. These lines of development continued under nationalist rule. The military establishment developed by the Nationalists did indeed make extensive use of citizen force and commando participation and the permanent force was always small relative to the whole force potentially available for mobilisation. But it was a highly professional force whose control over the citizen components was very firm, and whose ethos became one reflecting loyalties to the state rather than the volk. This does not mean that the military was simply one of subordination to civilian control as was officially claimed.⁴⁴ Especially from the mid-1970s, as the sense of crisis deepened, accelerating with the elevation of defence minister P.W. Botha to prime minister in 1979, the relationship became one of integration with other arms of state in a system of joint military-civilian rule.⁴⁵

In a sense then, the history of civil-military, and political-paramilitary relations within Afrikaner Nationalism reflects a mixed legacy. The celebration of resistance to illegitimate political authority and ancestrally hostile racial and national 'groups' is strong. But so too is the idea that all military action is the province of state, government and military establishments whose identities have blurred into a single authority complex. In this way, it can be argued that the extensive Afrikanerisation of the armed forces after 1948⁴⁶ may have fed on the volk's paramilitary traditions, but by formalising and bureaucratising them in an exclusively state context, the long-term effect was to rob them of much of its potentially dissident value.

Similarly, the extensive conscription and related measures, usually summarised as 'militarisation', which were so much part of state policy from the mid-1970s, may have encouraged some Afrikaner dissidents to think in paramilitary terms, especially through the propaganda-induced paranoia about 'total onslaught'. But by making such a conspicuous effort at military mobilisation itself, the state denied much ground to potentially rival paramilitary groups.⁴⁷ In fact, the state's military strategies in the domestic environment -- especially of course the use of covert units in an underground war against anti-apartheid forces -- create difficult analytical problems in distinguishing 'military' from 'paramilitary', and acts of violence by white dissidents from those of state functionaries, whether authorised or unauthorised.⁴⁸ These analytical problems were to emerge more forcefully after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990.

This mixed legacy has to be borne in mind in any assessment of the role of paramilitary groups in the dissolution of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition.

The Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging⁴⁹

The principal focus of paramilitary dissidence in the dissolution of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition has been the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB). The response of this body to the crisis of Afrikaner Nationalism, and the efforts of the National Party to reconstitute itself on a less exclusive basis than ethnic solidarity has been twofold. Its first self-assigned function has been to demonstrate a capacity to mobilise for violent direct action against political reform and its second to mobilise for the defence of white, and more specifically Afrikaner, interests in case the process of political change should degenerate into chaos

and violence. In doing so it has vehemently re-stated certain elements of traditional Afrikaner Nationalism, notably the coalition's populist dimension and certain aspects of its civil religion, the principal casualties of the NP's metamorphosis.

But in certain other aspects, it has departed from the mainstream of Afrikaner Nationalist ideas and apartheid ideology. Important in this context have been the degree of explicit racism with which it customarily expresses itself, the degree of exclusivity with which it defines who is an Afrikaner (or in its own preferred terms, a 'Boer'), and above all its conception of the basis for partition of South Africa into black and white-ruled states. In these altered perspectives and in its preferred modes of mobilisation and action the AWB has constituted an element of radical dissidence in the break up of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition.

The AWB was founded in 1973 in Heidelberg (Transvaal) by seven individuals, of whom two, Eugene Terre'Blanche and Jan Groenewald were particularly influential.⁵⁰ The group's motivation sprang from the same discontents which propelled dissidents from the National Party to form the HNP; Vorster's modest concessions to international opinion on sporting policy, the mild dilution of ethnic pieties in the NP's discourse, the emergence of class divisions among Afrikaners. Both Terre'Blanche and Groenewald had been full time employees of the HNP, and Terre'Blanche had been a candidate for parliament and the Transvaal Provincial Council in the HNP's interest. Their disillusion with the party's inability to make an impact within the constitutional framework of political competition led directly to their role in the founding of the AWB. As a result, the rejection of constitutional politics has

remained one of the movement's key characteristics. Shortly after founding the AWB, Terre'Blanche was expelled from the HNP.

The AWB remained largely inactive until the late 1970s when the turmoil of Muldergate and the change of leadership in the NP brought the party's transformation into focus. In March 1979, the AWB received wide public attention for the first time when a small group of its members tarred and feathered an Afrikaner professor of history as he addressed a conference in Pretoria. By calling into question the historical provenance of the Covenant myth -- one of the central elements in the Afrikaner civil religion -- Professor Floors van Jaarsveld made himself, in the AWB's eyes, an appropriate symbol of the changes taking place in Afrikaner Nationalism.⁵¹ In its attack on Professor van Jaarsveld, the AWB set the tone of romantic and theatrical fundamentalism which was to characterise it thereafter. To this was added a cult of paramilitary display and direct action, with a converse rejection of rationality and negotiation. All these things were expressed best in the ornamental rhetoric of Eugene Terre'Blanche, who had emerged as the movement's leader by the late 1970s. Following a well-trodden path of extreme right-wing political rhetoric⁵² he offered up his own experiential version of nationalist pieties and fundamentals for the benefit of those who felt betrayed and abandoned by the changes in the National Party's ethos.

After the founding of the Conservative Party gave a definite focus to the divisions in Afrikanerdom,⁵³ the AWB took on several specific functions within the growing and proliferating ranks of the white right. The first of these was paramilitary mobilisation, which in turn took two forms. The more overt was organisation for vigilante purposes.⁵⁴

Neighbourhood groups were formed with growing frequency from about 1985, whose functions included patrolling white areas to deter and expel 'criminals' and 'trespassers'. In effect this meant reserving the right to intimidate any blacks found on the streets after dark. Another function of these groups was to police violations of the Group Areas Act and other apartheid legislation, either forcing the authorities to act if they had been slow, or simply evicting blacks themselves.⁵⁵ The second paramilitary function was the formation and arming of terrorist cells which could carry out operations against anti-apartheid activists, or simply random black targets, in deterrence or reprisal for military acts of anti-government insurgents.⁵⁶

A third paramilitary function had a more direct political purpose in that it was aimed at affecting the outcome of white elections. This was to take over and/or force the cancellation of National Party election meetings (usually during by-election campaigns) by physical intimidation.⁵⁷ A political function which had nothing to do with physical force was to act as a mediator and link, a catalyst of unity, between the competing political parties on the right and in the white right generally. Before the 1987 whites-only general election, the AWB invested considerable effort in trying to overcome the hostile competition between the HNP and the Conservative Party, aware that this situation made a gift of several parliamentary seats to the Nationalists. A combination of personal rancour, the HNP's stubborn insistence on equal treatment with the much larger Conservative Party and the latter's calculation that it would take only one general election to kill off the HNP completely, prevented these efforts from bearing fruit.⁵⁸

Aside from paramilitarism and electoral activities, the AWB tried throughout the 1980s to cultivate a social role,

principally through feeding and other support schemes for white families who were affected by rising unemployment in the recessionary conditions of the mid-eighties.⁵⁹ Assistance was also made available to farmers, often combined with paramilitary patrolling of boundaries to counter stock theft and so on. One of the AWB's principal areas of concern, however, remained the guardianship of fundamental Afrikaner Nationalism. A typical expression of this was through gatherings at shrines on the sacred days of the nationalist calendar. By attracting bigger crowds than the Nationalists and in making sure that traditional verities were rhetorically expressed, in contrast to the often convoluted speeches of government ministers whose efforts to justify reform in terms of Afrikaner mythology were never plausible, the white right, with the AWB in the vanguard, occupied the physical and ideological space ceded in default by the Nationalists.⁶⁰

As the AWB took on these political and paramilitary roles throughout the 1980s, so also did its ideological and policy dimensions develop and emerge. A central element in the movement's ethos was the rejection of parliamentary politics. In Terre'Blanche's accounts of the AWB's origins, alienation from the "British Westminster system" takes pride of place, and the divisions of parliamentary democracy are viewed in his speeches and the AWB's literature as devices to weaken the volk. As the right emerged as a credible electoral force in the 1980s, Terre'Blanche's views appeared to gain substance in the discrepancy between votes for the right and the number of seats won by them, the difference attributable to the proportional vagaries of the Westminster system.⁶¹ This rejection of parliamentary politics was also strengthened by Terre'Blanche's exasperation with the failure of the HNP and the Conservative Party to agree on an electoral pact. In fact, the AWB was itself an element in

that disagreement.

The Conservative Party allowed its members to belong to the AWB, but the HNP -- which despite the extremity of its policies was a model of constitutional propriety and did not officially condone paramilitarism -- did not. The AWB's vision of the future was of a one party state ruled by technocrats in which ethnic homogeneity would preclude political competition. For pragmatic reasons in the near term however, the AWB made two concessions to parliamentary politics. The first was to register a political party, the Blanke Volkstaatsparty, in order to gain certain useful operating privileges.⁶² The party has been no more than a shell however and does not contest elections. The second concession is to support the Conservative Party in elections. After the 1987 election, the AWB claimed that four successful Conservative candidates were AWB members.⁶³

Along with this anti-political world view, certain other extreme right-wing staples are prominent in the AWB's ideology. Distrust of concentrations of wealth and economic power are expressed in ethnic and racial terms, as in rejection of "Anglo-Jewish money power". Such slogans are also resonant with the old nationalist rallying cries of populism and anti-imperialism. Valuing the land and agriculture higher than the city and industry falls into the same ideological category, as do vague notions of nationalisation and wealth as the property of the volk. As the movement developed in the 1980s, some effort was made to tone down crude racism, stressing that while it existed to assert and defend white interests, it did not propagate hatred of blacks, who would enjoy complete self-determination in their majority-rule state.⁶⁴ Nonetheless a strong underlying ethos of white superiority remained.

In fact there was much that was vague, confused and self-contradictory about the AWB's ideology and policies. A spectre of impracticality attended such concrete proposals as could be discerned. Three things, however, gave the AWB purchase in the dissolving world of Afrikaner unity. The first was the fundamentalist restatement of Afrikaner Nationalism, which (like religious fundamentalism) espoused the literal truth of the Afrikaner civil religion and was expressed literally in ceremonies of re-dedication. This was shared in large measure with all other right-wing movements and parties in South Africa. The second attribute was a version of Afrikaner self-determination which claimed the territory of the old Boer Republics in the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Northern Natal.⁶⁵ Despite the impracticalities of this scheme it can be argued that it was no more incredible than those of its competitors. The National Party's conception of white self-determination through group rights in a power-sharing system, the Conservative Party's initial claim to the 80% of South Africa which Verwoerdian apartheid sets aside for whites and the tiny kibbutz-like growth points of settlement envisaged by the radical partitionist groups on the right, were all inherently implausible.

The third thing to give the AWB purchase was its ability to express the frustration and sense of betrayal which the National Party's change of identity engendered in many Afrikaners. Again, this emotional theme was part of all South African right-wing movements, but the AWB with the romance and theatricality of its uniforms and rituals, the power of Terre'Blanche's oratory and its direct promise of violence, probably expressed it best.

The AWB's secretiveness about membership figures has made it difficult to estimate its support. Zille summarises the conventional wisdom of the late 1980s on the subject:

Estimates by specialist observers are that the AWB...has between 5 000 and 9 000 signed-up members, 150 000 supporters who attend the organisation's meetings, and about 500 000 tacit sympathisers.⁶⁶

Since just over 600 000 people voted for the CP and HNP in the 1987 general election, these estimates would suggest that something like five out of six right wing voters are at least 'tacit' sympathisers of the AWB. Even allowing for the fact that this designation is rather a 'soft' category, without much analytical substance, the estimate seems over-generous, suggesting a greater unity of sentiment on the right than is warranted by the evidence of its fragmented institutional state.

THE WHITE RIGHT SINCE 1990

The Conservative Party

The Conservative Party was already in a state of some disarray before President de Klerk's reforms of February 1990. The 33 seats which it won in the general election of September 1989 had been a disappointment to the party, falling well below the 60-66 which it had claimed was the likely tally. Such archaic policies as a 'coloured homeland' cast serious doubts on the Conservatives' claim to relevance, and even their successes were not easy to exploit. The difficulties of re-imposing strict racial segregation in the municipalities which they had controlled since the local elections of October 1988 highlighted their problems in coming to terms with the changing terrain of South African politics. This became especially clear after the Supreme Court ruled illegal the attempted reversion to hard-line apartheid in Carletonville and Boksburg.

Dissidents who favoured a greatly reduced white homeland over the claim to rule the whole of South Africa had already made their appearance at the party's Transvaal congress in October 1989, signalling the stressful effects of these developments on party unity.⁶⁷

The Conservatives' immediate reaction to the unbanning of the ANC and its allies, was to threaten a stayaway of whites 'in everything from the SAA to hospitals, police, fire brigades, businesses and schools.'⁶⁸ This threat was made in the context of a campaign which included a drive to gather one million signatures rejecting de Klerk's policies, mass marches, and a rally on 26 May, the anniversary of the Nationalists taking power in 1948.⁶⁹ The 26 May meeting was widely predicted to be part of a campaign which would include widespread strikes and a possible boycott of Parliament and municipal councils.⁷⁰ In the event, the crowd which attended the rally fell well short of the over 100 000 expected⁷¹ and the proposals for action made by Dr. Treurnicht were considerably less radical than predicted.⁷²

In order to succeed in reversing de Klerk's reforms, the four-month campaign would have had to impress the government with the threat of extra-parliamentary mobilisation so extensive as to threaten chaos and social breakdown. This it signally failed to do and over the next 18 months the Conservative Party, while not entirely relinquishing its new-found rhetoric of militancy, relapsed into a familiar parliamentary strategy of forcing another test of white opinion in a general election, on the grounds that de Klerk had no mandate for the extent of his reforms. The chosen medium was by-election contests. This predominantly electoral and parliamentary strategy was more congenial to the CP than one of radical, direct action. The party had no substantial core of the disaffected and excluded,

substantially motivated by class resentment as well as ethnic betrayal. More important, there was no substantial extra-parliamentary force to take such an initiative and force the CP into action in its wake. Other factors influencing the grip of parliamentarianism on the party were; a residual belief in democracy (albeit confined to whites); Dr. Treurnicht, a leader to whom the values of procedural civility were very important; an ethnic world-view in which the objects of resistance -- the government and National Party -- were still Afrikaners, no matter how seriously misled.

As it happened, the by-election strategy yielded results which apparently vindicated the CP's strategic choice. In 1990 and 1991, the CP contested five by-elections.⁷³ The highest swing recorded in the CP's favour was 23.61% (Umlazi, Durban, June 1990) and the lowest, 7.4% (Ladybrand, Cape, May 1991).⁷⁴ Despite the encouragement of this sustained improvement, the results seemed to indicate that support for the white right was too substantial for its demand for a full-scale test of white opinion to be ignored, but would probably fall short of winning that test. Unfortunately for the CP moreover, the government could choose one of two tests, a general election for which the CP would need a swing of 12% to win, or a referendum in which victory would require a swing of 19%.⁷⁵ Apart from the obvious attraction of a referendum (given these figures) for the government, a whites-only general election would be virtually impossible to hold in the likely face of stormy black opposition.⁷⁶ In fact, the logic of the CP's strategy of shunning negotiations and sticking rigidly to the narrow terrain of white politics was to bring about a contest in which victory for the right represented a decidedly uphill task.

Such factors presumably played a part in President de Klerk's calculations when the Conservative Party won the Potchefstroom by-election in February 1992. De Klerk had chosen the occasion of his party's defeat in the Virginia by-election, three months previously, to announce that Potchefstroom would be a 'better test' of (white) public opinion. Despite this hostage to fortune, the Nationalists fought what was generally agreed to be a half-hearted campaign featuring a lack-lustre candidate and compounding their own problems by announcing politically damaging policies from cabinet level two days before polling. The NP strategy seemed to be so inept that there was widespread speculation (after the event) that the Potchefstroom defeat was an elaborate ambush for the Conservatives, as well as a means of bringing home to the ANC the danger of the white right and of 'selling' the idea of a whites-only referendum to them.⁷⁷ Whether or not such a degree of Machiavellian calculation went into the decision, de Klerk did call a referendum, asking for approval of his reform policies thus far and a mandate for continuing the negotiation process.

The underlying weaknesses of the CP's position which had been concealed by a smokescreen of by-election successes could no longer be concealed. Firstly, as the referendum question itself made clear, the future of the country could no longer be decided exclusively by a contest for the allegiance of white voters. Secondly, in any case, the ethnic and class interests behind the CP now accounted for only a minority of the white electorate. These weaknesses were heavily underscored when the CP could not at first make up its mind whether or not to contest the referendum, suggesting that the leadership was not unaware of them.

Although the Conservatives now probably outscored the NP in support from Afrikaners, burgeoning support from English

speakers kept the NP ahead in white votes.⁷⁸ Two structural factors continued to inhibit further growth in CP support, as they had done throughout the 1980s. Firstly, its principal appeal was to declining social groups in agriculture, industry and the lower-ranks in the bureaucracy, occupational categories which accounted for smaller percentages of the white population every year. And secondly, despite efforts to attract English-speaking voters, the party's main *raison d'être* was as the vehicle of Afrikaner Nationalism, which deterred all but a very small minority of English-speakers from anything but a fleeting and opportunistic identification with the CP.⁷⁹

Two further problems contributed a degree of incoherence to the CP. The first was a lack of clear cut policy. This reflected differences among the party's supporters (notably in the parliamentary caucus itself) between those who were prepared to accept a smaller white 'homeland' and those who demanded the present extent of 'white' South Africa as the extent of white territory, at least for bargaining purposes.⁸⁰ The degree to which rigid apartheid laws would be re-introduced in a CP-ruled South Africa (of whatever territorial extent) was also the occasion of flatly contradictory pronouncements by leading party spokesmen.⁸¹ The long-running uncertainties of CP relationships with the further right and especially the paramilitary AWB was a second source of confusion, despite the declaration of a common front to fight for a 'no' vote.

All these formidable obstacles to the growth of the CP and the successful prosecution of a 'no' campaign were inherent in the party's own nature. External factors were also forbidding. In promoting a 'yes' vote, President de Klerk had the support of the liberal white opposition, virtually all of organised business and commerce, all important

newspapers, the ANC and the international community. In addition, the National Party did not scruple to use the resources of the state-run media and the bureaucracy (in speedily processing citizenship applications for instance) in the 'yes' campaign.

The CP's defeat in the referendum halted in its tracks the impression of momentum which the by-election victories had created. It greatly sharpened the internal conflict between those who were prepared to accept a smaller white homeland, and others who insisted on the territorial status quo.⁸² Of the other differences between the camps, the most important was over the question of whether to participate in the negotiations. Although the referendum result effectively ended any possibility of coming to power through the white polity, there were those in the CP who still refused to negotiate with anyone other than the leaders of volks (nations), a category which excludes the ANC. The volkstaters (those who argue for a smaller white homeland) represented the negotiating wing of the party. Between 2 February 1990 and the referendum two years later, these divisions were contained with grave difficulty.⁸³ After the referendum the CP could not hold together.⁸⁴ Although the 'volkstaters' or 'new right' would have preferred to convert the CP to its policies, when a breakaway came, the fact that only five members of the parliamentary caucus left to form the Afrikaner Volksunie (AVU) and pursue policies of negotiation for Afrikaner self-determination indicates the balance of power in the party.⁸⁵

In the last months of 1992, shaken by the disappearance of the exclusively white polity, embarrassed by the breakaway of the AVU, emboldened perhaps by the possibilities of cooperation with conservative homelands interests⁸⁶ and informed by a public opinion poll that 70% of their

supporters favoured talks,⁸⁷ the CP reassessed its position on negotiations. Although it was clear that internal divisions on the issue remained, the party announced in mid-January 1993 that it was willing to join multi-party negotiations when they resumed. The decision also marked the CP's conversion to a negotiated territorial settlement reflecting the aspiration to Afrikaner self-determination. Indeed it was repeatedly made clear that this was the only issue the CP would countenance at the talks.⁸⁸ The CP duly put its proposals for an Afrikaner state to the negotiation forum in June. Despite containing extensive constitutional detail, the plans specified neither boundaries nor unambiguous qualifications for citizenship. Negotiators would not elaborate on these issues.⁸⁹ It is likely that the death of CP leader Andries Treurnicht (22 April 1993) less than a month after the Conservative Party had joined the multi-party talks allowed divisions over the negotiations to re-emerge more bitterly than before. Certainly his successor, Ferdi Hartzenberg was known to be a hardliner, vehemently opposed to the negotiation process as it had been structured by the government and the ANC.⁹⁰ The realisation that its proposals for an Afrikaner state could hardly be expected to win the approval of the main negotiators and the emergence of the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF)⁹¹ which promised to unite the disparate forces of the white right were further influences in persuading the CP to join Chief Minister Buthelezi in withdrawing from the multi-lateral talks early in July. Since that point, the CP's role has been increasingly to act as part of the AVF and COSAG (renamed the Freedom Alliance in early October) rather than individually.

The Paramilitary Right and the White Trade Unions since 1990

Like the Conservative Party, the paramilitary right has experienced mixed fortunes since 1990. De Klerk's reforms encouraged a revival of interest in paramilitarism, and by late 1990, one estimate put the number of paramilitary groups at 20, with a total membership of perhaps 18 000.⁹² This undoubted growth was characterised more by theatricality and shadow-play than substantive action, a perennial problem in assessing the status of right wing paramilitaries.⁹³ These qualities were exemplified by the career of Piet "Skiet" (shoot) Rudolph, who skillfully manipulated the media into projecting him as a pimpnel figure while on the run after carrying out a raid on an Air Force arms depot. At the same time, the message from paramilitary spokesmen echoed that of political readers on the right -- the time had come to prepare for armed action, but not to unleash it. Typical of this consensus is the statement of Boerestaat Party leader Robert van Tonder:

The Boer army will begin shooting on the day when the volk loses the right of self-determination (besluitnemingsreg) over itself. (author's translation).⁹⁴

One area in which substantive action was taken however, setting a pattern for right-wing activities, was vigilante protection of white privileges in residential areas, workplace and municipal facilities. Serious clashes took places in the Orange Free State mining town of Welkom, where a campaign of action against racism in the workplace by the black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), beginning in 1989, sparked off counter-accusations of assaults against white miners underground.⁹⁵ The ensuing conflict was clearly exacerbated by the reactions of both white and black miners to the ANC's unbanning and spread from the workplace to involve vigilante actions in white neighbourhoods, a consumer boycott by black organisations and police shootings

of black demonstrators.⁹⁶ In later developments (May-June), an incident arising out of the wearing of ANC colours by miners underground at President Steyn mine saw demonstrating black miners shot at, and two white miners murdered. Explosions, including one at NUM headquarters in Welkom led to AWB leaders in the area being detained.⁹⁷

Events in Welkom in the first half of 1990 showed how well the paramilitary right could exploit a situation of structural tension involving workplace and territorial issues. Not least of the right-wing gains was a propaganda coup scored when Eugene Terre'Blanche met law and order minister Adrian Vlok.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the Welkom conflicts were isolated, and remote from the country's political, administrative and industrial heartlands. The effectiveness of the blacks' counter weapon of consumer boycott and the arrest of right-wing activists contained and curtailed the right's ability to exploit the situation.

In the second half of 1990, security police carried out numerous raids, detaining suspects and recovering stolen arms.⁹⁹ Preventive measures were also evident including, for instance, the withdrawal of arms from part-time commando units, whose loyalties might lie with the right. By September 1990, the paramilitary right was reported to be in serious disarray, subject to repeated infiltration from the security police and "unexpectedly harsh action".¹⁰⁰ Police measures also extended to the right's attempts at vigilante and mass action. On 11 May 1991, police engaged a group of right-wing farmers who were attempting to evict a black community from the Goedgevonden farm near Ventersdorp in the Western Transvaal. The community, which had been forcibly removed from the land in 1978, reclaimed it in April 1991. Two farmers were wounded in the skirmish when police moved in to protect the residents from attack.¹⁰¹ On 9 August,

three people were killed and 53 wounded when right wingers tried to prevent President de Klerk from speaking at a National Party meeting in Ventersdorp. About 2 000 AWB supporters engaged a similar number of police, with firearms used by both sides.¹⁰²

The issue of state action against right-wing paramilitaries is a contentious one. Some sources argue that the state shows undue tolerance towards the right, allowing paramilitary training and insurrectionary rhetoric to a degree forbidden to anti-apartheid activists.¹⁰³ Others take a diametrically opposed view:

An extraordinary feature of right wing attacks has been the diligence with which the state has investigated them, and the extremely high rate of success it has had in making arrests and obtaining convictions. Just what the reasons are for this outstanding display of political will is not clear, but what is clear is that the capacity and ability exists for the solution of crimes of political violence.¹⁰⁴

Several points can be made in confronting these apparently irreconcilable assertions, suggesting that in fact, in their own ways, both could be correct. Firstly, particularly in the intimate conditions of rural and small town South Africa, remote from central control, police, state legal functionaries (where they are not the police themselves) and right-wing civilians may have close links.¹⁰⁵ The tolerance and even cooperation bred in these situations could easily co-exist with infiltration, investigation and prosecution of right-wing groups by the security forces at higher structural levels, closer to central control. Secondly, the security forces are not monolithic; they are subject to divisions between reformers and reactionaries like the rest of white South Africa and in their own case to the

conflicting tensions between partisanship and professionalism. As a result, it should not be surprising if a mixed response to the white right is evident. Thirdly, it is likely that the government and security forces believe that the repression of the grass roots mobilisation of right-wing paramilitaries would be difficult and possibly counter-productive in both political and security terms. At the same time the energetic pursuit of right-wing terrorists is politically essential.

Whether through security force vigilance, their own infrastructural shortcomings, or strategic choice, right-wing paramilitary organisations have played only a minor role in the political violence which has consumed South Africa since 1990. Certainly this conclusion holds true if numbers of incidents and deaths attributable to right-wing actions are taken as yardsticks. For instance, the Human Rights Commission's two year survey¹⁰⁶ (July 1990 - June 1992) records a total of 207 'right-wing attacks' causing 44 deaths and 347 injuries. In the same period, an overall total of 5 700 incidents were recorded and a total of 6 229 deaths. 'right-wing attacks' caused 0.7% of these deaths. Not only is the overall percentage very low, but a very low percentage of deaths per incident is evident (21%).¹⁰⁷

Two features of the paramilitary right (and by extension, the right-wing phenomenon in general) may help explain the level and character of right-wing violence. The first is the right's apparent inability to achieve a concentration of forces. The difficulties of aligning the largely law-abiding electoral support of the Conservative Party with mass direct action, never mind violence, have already been noted. The failure of the CP campaign to reverse the de Klerk reforms between February and May 1990 underlines the point. Equally, there is no sign yet of the kind of alliance between white

workers and paramilitaries which could destabilise the country to the right's disadvantage. There is plenty of rhetoric¹⁰⁸ and it is a central article of faith on the right that "a three day stayaway by white workers could shut down the whole economy".¹⁰⁹ This threat remains a staple of Eugene Terre'Blanche's repertoire:

If the right wing finds each other, then they have the power to bring South Africa to a complete stop. With their strength in the labour field, they can bring every train to a halt...They can destroy communications totally ... if the boys of ESKOM switch off the lights then it will be darkest Africa".¹¹⁰

Despite reported gains for militant white unions over more moderate ones since early 1990¹¹¹ there have been no experimental or demonstrative exercises to flex the alleged muscle and give any substance to the threat.¹¹²

Allied to the right's inability to concentrate its forces is a second characteristic, the strategic policy of reserving the threat of far-reaching direct action for after the assumption of power by a black government. Another central theme of the right's rhetoric is to stress the preparatory nature of all its present activities. By this choice, and by refusing until early 1993 to become involved in negotiations with black political groups, the right-wing parties and organisations have retained (whether deliberately or not) the character of pressure groups on the National Party government, rather than actors in their own right. In fact, although the Nationalist coalition has long ago lost its organisational basis and ideological coherence, the right-wing groups have neither sought, nor even exercised by default, the autonomy which should have been the inevitable by-product of the coalitions's decay. The main aim of the

Conservative Party (and even largely the AWB) has been to 'bring the government to its senses' rather than to take new initiatives in altered conditions for revised configurations of social forces.¹¹³ Apparently only after the end of white rule will they do so.

The Revolt of the Farmers and the Formation of the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF)

Early in 1993, moves to consolidate right-wing forces in a unified front suggested that these limitations could be transcended. Several factors contributed to this development. The whites-only referendum of March 1992 effectively spelled the end to the white polity as a separate entity, and the right's ambitions to come to power through white elections. But something like one third of white voters associated themselves with the right's rejection of de Klerk's reforms and many (perhaps most) of those who did vote for reform did so out of a profound desire for a peaceful and stable new dispensation in which a future black government would be effectively contained by constitutional constraints. By early 1993, negotiations had been bogged down for over six months, political and criminal violence were running at high levels and the government's ability to force a settlement favourable to whites on the ANC appeared to be in doubt. Most serious of all was the armed campaign against whites undertaken by the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), late in 1992 and continuing into 1993. These developments made themselves felt in widely-reported disillusion with the National Party and further decay of its grass roots infrastructure. Coincidentally, the National Party re-launched itself as a specifically non-racial, non-ethnic party, with strong emphasis on attracting the support of coloured voters in the

Cape. This caused further discontent among Nationalist supporters in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

These factors were enough to crystallise and multiply white fears and disillusion, but what translated them into significant action on the right was the simultaneous emergence of farmers as a corporate social force capable of forming the core of right wing unity, and a group of recently-retired military officers to provide leadership. Historically, the agricultural sector has been of central importance in the white South African polity and the South African economy; "...in 1910, more than 50 per cent of the MPs in the South African Parliament were farmers with an electoral system biased towards agricultural interest and the vote loaded in favour of rural areas".¹¹⁴

At present however, white farmers have declined to 60 000, while agriculture contributes less than 6% to South Africa's GDP, employing 12.5% of the economically active population. The influence of agricultural lobbies has declined correspondingly, leaving a sense of grievance which helped ensure that in the 1980s the National Party lost most of its rural seats in the Transvaal and Orange Free State to the Conservative Party, while the Transvaal and Orange Free State Agricultural Unions became strongholds of the right.

An increasingly unfavourable political climate for white farmers has developed at the same time as prolonged drought conditions (the worst for over 60 years) have extended from the 1980s into the 1990s. This coincidence has meant cumulative blows to the farmers' morale and position of privilege which include; exposure to more market-related interest rates and producer prices; the repeal of the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 which reserved most of the country's agricultural land for white ownership; the extension to the

agricultural sector of labour legislation embodying basic workers' rights¹¹⁵; the exposure of farmers to claims for recompense and redistribution from land-hungry blacks, and to physical attack from criminals and radical black groups.¹¹⁶

Noting an alleged neglect of the rural environment by researchers in South Africa, one authority (writing in 1988) argued:

..there is little doubt that, over the next few years the attitudes and behaviour of white farmers at the periphery of the South African state, as well as their black workers, will play a crucial part in the future of the country.¹¹⁷

The emergence of farmers as a body which can combine corporate material concerns with a degree of ethnic solidarity and the expression of national political fears and dissatisfactions, tends to support this prediction. Since 1990, farmers have added direct action to the traditional lobbying for influence. In January 1991 they blocked Pretoria's main streets with agricultural vehicles,¹¹⁸ and in May 1991 2 000 of them attempted to evict 'squatters' from government-owned land at Goedgevonden in the Western Transvaal.¹¹⁹ The farmers' lobbying bodies were the theatre of struggle between the government and the right.¹²⁰ In early 1993, a number of developments quickened the longer term concerns of the farmers and prompted them to action; the condition of the country in the immediate aftermath of Chris Hani's assassination seemed to suggest that the initiative had passed conclusively to the ANC, that perhaps the government could no longer be regarded as the sovereign power; the death of Conservative Party leader, Andries Treurnicht opened the possibility of re-alignment on

the right; agreement on the joint control of security forces by the government and the ANC seemed imminent; the maize price was fixed for the coming year at a level considered by farmers to be unacceptably low; the imposition of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act seemed imminent. The urgency of these developments gave impetus to efforts (which had been going on for about nine months) aimed at consolidating Afrikaner political groups to the right of the government. These efforts centred on a steering body, the Volkseenheidskomittee (Vekom), in which former military commanders were prominent.¹²¹

A week of intense right-wing mobilisation, which was given a popular dimension by a mass meeting of farmers in Potchefstroom on 7 May, culminated in the formation of a Volksfront whose purpose is to unite the disparate political, occupational, ideological and paramilitary forces on the right, behind the idea of 'Afrikaner self-determination'.

The initiative for the Volksfront lay in the hands of four retired army and police generals who had only recently become active in politics.¹²² The prestige of these men (especially former head of the army Constand Viljoen) gave impetus to the unity moves, but what gave them their principal impact was a protest meeting of farmers in Potchefstroom on Friday 6 May, the day before the Front's formation. It is Afrikaner dominance of the agricultural sector which ensures that occupational grievances are fused with ethnic and nationalist fears and discontents to form a potentially solid foundation for right-wing dissent.

The Volksfront¹²³ set up a 17-man steering committee to draw up plans of action before the Front's next meeting on 19 May, but anticipating this, farmers outlined certain

specific positions at the 6 May meeting. These included both political and economic demands; negotiations should be suspended until the 'private armies' of the black political movements are brought under control; farmers will not 'serve' under an ANC government; farmers will not operate the Basic Conditions of Employment Act; security forces, of which practically all farmers are part-time members, should refuse to serve an ANC government. Actions threatened in furtherance of these positions included immobilising large cities by blocking roads with agricultural machinery, ceasing to pay debts, and a 'producer strike' to 'empty shelves of food'.¹²⁴

Any assessment of these moves on the right has to take the following points into account in a situation which remains fluid at the time of writing. All the main figures involved have avoided inflammatory rhetoric and have expressed themselves with firmness but caution. For instance, Genl. Viljoen (easily the most impressive of the new leaders) was careful to stress that negotiations should not be abandoned, but only suspended until violence is brought under control. Despite the commitment to unity, substantial forces on the right have yet to be incorporated. For instance, the paramilitary AWB was virtually excluded from the Potchefstroom meeting, and it is obvious that the racism, emotional rhetoric and violence which give the AWB its neo-fascist character are not welcome in the new grouping. It is equally clear that if the AWB is to play a part, it will be very much on the new leadership's terms.

Although there was an impressive turnout at Potchefstroom (estimates varied from 6-12 000 with the majority in the 6-8 000 range), the farmers' numbers are very small in a country of over 30 million. And by the very nature of their occupation, farmers are geographically dispersed, locally as

well as nationally, diffusing and diluting their political strength. While the combination of occupational grievances and wider political discontent makes a formidable mobilising combination in the short term, it is vulnerable to piecemeal concessions (heavier security protection in the rural areas¹²⁵, debt alleviation schemes, upward adjustment of the maize price), and it will be difficult to carry the initial impetus through to force an overall political settlement through on terms favourable to the right.

Perhaps most problematic of all is the fact that conceptions of 'Afrikaner self-determination' vary very widely in theory, and in projected institutional expression. Some Afrikaner groups are very anxious to include Afrikaans speakers of all races -- especially coloured people -- while others are equivocal, or openly define 'Afrikaner' in racial terms. The status of an Afrikaner 'homeland' -- whether a sovereign independent state or an autonomous region in a greater South Africa -- is in dispute, as is the likely geographic location.¹²⁶

Viewed in this light, the farmers' movement and mobilisation on the right are not likely to derail the negotiation process or lead to the creation of an Afrikaner state. But they have nudged the question of Afrikaner self-determination closer to the top of the negotiating agenda, and should help clarify that concept into a more politically viable form than any which has previously emerged.¹²⁷

The recent demonstrations of right-wing unity and strength appear at the time of writing to presage a return to effective political mobilisation by whites which will be influential in pressure group politics in the short to medium terms. The combination of sectoral economic and national political grievances which animated the farmers'

protest is unlikely, however, to be sustained into a movement durable enough to affect the outcome of negotiations in a decisive way.

CONCLUSION

The central fact in the break up of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition has been that the National Party was able between 1981 and 1992 to enlist a substantial block of Afrikaners behind 'reform' as a popular political position. The number of Afrikaner votes that the NP could attract declined throughout the 1980s, but the haemorrhage stabilised between 1987 and 1989, and the limits of Conservative Party growth seemed to be confirmed by the whites-only referendum in March 1992. By maintaining its popular position and retaining possession of the state, the NP could define itself as the vehicle of the Afrikaner mainstream and the right as the radical breakaways who disrupted unity. Although by no means incontestable, this claim carried enough political weight to force the CP into the unpromising role of outsiders striving to reconvert the mainstream, to reconquer the middle ground. Afrikaner unity has always involved a difficult balancing act between those for whom it has meant the realisation of something exclusive and an end in itself, and those for whom it has meant a strong base on which Afrikaners (and Afrikaner interest groups) could co-exist with other political and social forces. For those of this persuasion, partnership with English-speaking whites in a system of white supremacy could logically be extended to partnership with Indians and coloureds in a coalition of minorities against the black majority.

Especially after this development, the legacies of exclusivity and pragmatism could not be kept in harmony and

the latter strain came to dominate the NP thereafter. It is a tribute to the hall of mirrors effects of reform that the NP could accommodate blacks as permanent fixtures in the economy and white South Africa, Indians and coloureds in the constitution, English-speakers in its electoral constituency, and finally negotiate the end of statutory apartheid with liberation movements, while still remaining a largely Afrikaner party presiding over a largely Afrikaner state. This remarkable achievement required the ruthless abandonment of the overt baggage of Afrikaner mythology while maintaining, for the time being at least the substance of Afrikaner control.

It was an act which the Conservative Party could not match. Rejecting both the ambiguities (to say the least) of the NP's transformation and the conclusions drawn by the radical partitionist groups which were willing to settle for a much smaller territory to be controlled exclusively by Afrikaners, the CP simply refused to recognise that the political terrain had shifted. This recognition was belatedly forced on it by the referendum result which made it plain that there was no hope of reconstructing the exclusively white polity and the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition which had dominated it.

That the NP was able to manage and to a degree control the break up of the coalition which it had hitherto led was attributable first of all to the resources which it commanded. The identification of state, party and volk which had been cultivated since 1948, gave resilience and strength to state structures, put considerable patronage at the disposal of the party, along with the control of information and coercion. It also diluted the importance of the volk and its primary organisations. Because the 'chosen people' version had never been the sole or even dominant Afrikaner

identity, the NP's equivocations about 'peoples', 'population groups' and finally 'minorities' did not represent a complete volte face for their supporters. Neither did change, adaptation and innovation. Afrikaner Nationalism, contrary to its reputation for immobility, had displayed enough dynamism in the past for the idea (if not always the precise details) of change to have resonance for at least the more self-confident of Afrikaners. Not least of the resources available to the NP was their ability to point to the stark dangers of immobility.

To the end the white right wing has continued to believe that 'reform' was a confidence trick brought about by misinformation, self-delusion and downright mendacity about the nature and extent of the process and the likely cumulative and collateral effects of reforms in acquiring a logic of their own which would destroy the system they were meant to preserve. There is much truth in this interpretation. As late as the 1992 referendum campaign, the NP was being very economical with the truth about black majority rule as the outcome of negotiation.

To focus on this truth however is to miss the point. The very essence of a successful confidence trick is that the victims are willing participants in the deception. Perhaps the most important factor of all in the break up of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition was the existence of a large percentage of Afrikaners who believed that there was a way to preserve their identity and prosperity without either the human and material costs of domination, or of giving up control completely. It was the maintenance of this core constituency which allowed the NP to deploy its considerable resources of patronage, co-option and coercion to survive its own transformation intact.

1. For overviews of the emergence and institutional forms of the white right see Zille, H. "The Right Wing in South African Politics" in Berger, P.L. and Godsell, B. (eds.) A Future South Africa Pretoria, Human and Rousseau (1988) pp.55-94; Grobbelaar, J. and Bekker, S. (1) "The White Rightwing Movement in South Africa: Before and After the May 1987 Election" in van Vuuren, D.J. et al (eds.) The South African Election of 1987 Pinetown, Owen Burgess Publishers (1987) pp.65-79; (2) Vir Volk en Vaderland: a Guide to the White Right Durban, Indicator SA 1989. See also Adam, H. and Moodley, K. South Africa Without Apartheid Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman (1986) pp.58-76. For interpretation see Giliomee, H. "Broedertwis: Intra-Afrikaner Conflicts in the Transition from Apartheid" African Affairs Vol. 91 (1992) pp.339-64.

2. This means that rivalries, struggles for control and breakaways in cultural and religious organisations, and interest groups like the provincial agricultural unions, will not receive separate and detailed treatment. It was in the Conservative Party, the unions and the paramilitaries that the right's best hopes of destabilising the political process lay, and the other organisations' purposes and functions largely overlapped with them. In addition, it is in these political, industrial and paramilitary expressions of discontent that the most direct comparisons with the break up of the Ulster Unionist coalition can be made.

3. On this point, see Davenport, R. "Unrest, Reform, and Challenges to the Law, 1976-87" in Bennet, T.W. et al (eds.) Law Under Stress: South African Law in the 1980s (special edition of Acta Juridica 1987) Cape Town, Juta (1988) pp.1-33, at p.7.

4. For an account of the 27 February confrontation see Giliomee, H. The Parting of the Ways Cape Town, David Philip (1982) p.158. Versions differ as to the number of MPs who formed the CP. Zille, "The Right Wing in South African Politics" (p.57), Baker, P. "South Africa: the Afrikaner Angst" Foreign Policy Vol. 69 Winter 1987-8, pp.61-79 (p.68) and Charney, C. "Restructuring White Politics: the Transformation of the National Party" South African Review 1 (1983) pp.142-154 (p.145) say 16. Grobbelaar and Bekker, "Vir Volk and Vaderland" (p.10) say 17. Charney, C. "Class Conflict and the Nationalist Split" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 10 (2) April 1984, pp.269-282 (p.273) says 15. And Charney, C. "Towards Rupture or Stasis? an Analysis of the 1981 South African General Election" African Affairs 81 (325) 1982 (p.543) says 18.

5. Charney, "Towards Rupture or Stasis?" reports swings of 18-25% in the Transvaal platteland, and an average swing of 23% in eight mining seats.

6. The National Party attracted only 63% of Afrikaner voters

in this election compared to the 83-85% it polled in the 1970, 1974 and 1977 elections. In 1981, 33% of Afrikaners voted for the far right compared to 7% in 1977. For these figures and an analysis of their significance, see Giliomee, The Parting of the Ways pp.113-116.

7. For a discussion of the HNP's platform in the 1981 election see South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Survey (1981) pp.9-10.

8. Bekker and Grobbelaar, "The White Rightwing Movement in South Africa.." p.73.

9. For a summary and discussion of by-election results in the early and mid 1980s see Obery, I. and van Niekerk, P. "The Crucial Issue is Black Politics" Work in Progress 47 (1977) pp.8-14 at pp.10-11. See also "The day PW lost the volk ..and gained the English instead" Weekly Mail 1-7 November (1985).

10. For results and analysis see the contributions to van Vuuren and others, The White General Election of 1987 especially Schlemmer, L. "Assessment: the 1987 Election in the South African Political Process" pp.319-329 and Bekker and Grobbelaar, "The White Right"; see also Bekker and Grobbelaar, Vir Volk en Vaderland p.8.

11. Baker, "South Africa: the Afrikaner Angst" claims that 43% of Afrikaners voted for the Conservative Party in 1987 as against 50% for the Nationalists, but does not cite a source for this estimate. Bekker and Grobbelaar cite two "experienced commentators" to support the claim that "close to one half of Afrikaner voters supported the CP and HNP in the 1987 election" ("The White Right..." p.68). Schlemmer ("Assessment...." p.322) states that the pattern of support among language groups "...cannot be gauged from election results" but cites an ex post facto poll published in an Afrikaans newspaper as the authority for figures of 58.6% (NP), 32% (CP) and 4.6% (HNP) as the main preferences of Afrikaners in 1987.

12. Bekker and Grobbelaar, "The White Right..." pp.66-7.

13. See Bekker, S. and Grobbelaar, J. "Has the Conservative Party Bandwagon slowed Down?" (pp.9-11) and Humphries, R. "The New White Municipal Politics" (pp.13-15), both in Indicator SA Vol. 6 (1-2) Summer/Autumn 1989.

14. The CP won 39 seats in the 1989 election, an increase of 17 over the 1987 result. It did not, however, raise its share of the vote which remained at 33%. For results and interpretation see Taylor, R. "Between Apartheid and Democracy: the South African General Election of 1989" South African Review 5 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1989) pp.56-67; Schlemmer, L. "De Klerk's Five Options: a Mandate for Change"; Humphries, R. "The Swinging Vote"; and Grobbelaar, J. "Parliament in the Promised Land: the CP and the Ultra-Right" all in Indicator SA Vol. 6 (4) Spring 1989, pp.9-24.

15. For treatments which emphasise class factors in the growth of CP support see O'Meara, D. (1) Volkskapitalisme Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1983) pp.248-256 (2)

"'Muldergate' and the Politics of Afrikaner Nationalism" Work in Progress Vol. 22 (1982) pp.1-18; Charney, C. (1) "The National Party, 1982-1985" in James, W. (ed.) The State of Apartheid Boulder, Lynne Rienner (1987) pp.5-36; (2) "Restructuring White Politics: the Transformation of the National Party" (3) "Towards Rupture or Stasis.." (4) "Class Conflict and the National Party Split". For a critique (which nonetheless endorses the importance of "larger social processes" in explaining political developments in Afrikaner society) see Giliomee, "Broedertwis: Intra-Afrikaner Conflicts..."

16. See Greenberg, S. Legitimizing the Illegitimate Berkeley, University of California Press (1987) pp.112-13, pp.117-20 and pp.160-66. Greenberg's interviews with bureaucrats responsible for administering influx control, revealed their opposition to reform and alienation from the 'ascendant discourse' in the government and National Party. A significant finding -- given the weight of Afrikaner business interests behind reformists in the NP -- is their casting of employers as disruptive forces, destructive of the larger social order of inter-group relations, in the interests of exploiting black labour. While Greenberg does not explicitly draw the conclusion that his informants (interviewed between 1980 and 1985) were CP supporters, their collective world view is very much in harmony with that party's position.

17. Lewis, J. Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, 1924-55 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1984) p.178.

18. Greenberg, S. Race and State in Capitalist Development Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1980) p.325.

19. See Sitas, A. "Rebels Without a Pause: the MWU and the Defence of the Colour Bar" South African Labour Bulletin Vol. 5 (3) October 1979, pp.30-58. See also Rafel, R. "Job Reservation on the Mines" South African Review 4 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1987) pp.263-282, especially pp.269-271.

20. Sitas, "Rebels Without a Pause" p.33.

21. Sitas, "Rebels Without a Pause" p.42.

22. Sitas points out ("Rebels Without a Pause" p.54) that despite the abandonment of the experiment, concessions were in fact made by the miners over the issue of black advancement. Rafel discusses further concessions made by the MWU in 1973 in return for higher pay, and after negotiations lasting more than a year, more agreements on black advancement were made in 1976, in return for a five day week: "Job Reservation on the Mines" pp.271-3.

23. The National Union of Miners which represented black miners was formed in 1982.

24. See Cooper, C. "The Mineworkers' Strike" South African Labour Bulletin Vol. 5 (2) May 1979.

25. Sitas, "Rebels Without a Pause" p.55.

26. See the entry in Davies, R. et al (eds.) The Struggle For South Africa: a Reference Guide to Movements, Organizations and Institutions London, Zed Press (2 Vols.) (1984). See also Lewis, Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation pp.157-8.
27. Davies, R. et al, The Struggle For South Africa p.256.
28. "Mixed unions outnumber segregated ones -- govt", Cape Times 27.2.87.
29. See Jochelson, K. "Unions and Right Wing Politics: 'You Name it, We Got it'" Work in Progress (37) June 1985, pp.27-29; Giliomee, H. "Afrikaner Politics 1977-87" in Brewer, J. (ed.) Can South Africa Survive? Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers (1989) pp.118-121.
30. Professor W. Kleynhans, addressing the South African Confederation of Labour's annual congress in 1980, reported in South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Survey 1980, p.167.
31. Although the Wiehahn Commission's recommendations for the mining industry were published in 1981 (after the white general election of that year) it took six years of negotiations before job reservation was completely abolished, with the opening of blasting certificates to Africans by the Mines and Works Act of 1987 (after the white general election of that year). See Rafel, "Job Reservation on the Mines" pp.273-282. For the continuing struggle between the Chamber of Mines and the MWU over black advancement, even after 1987, see South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Survey 1988-89 pp.416-8.
32. Rafel, "Job Reservation on the Mines" p.276.
33. For reports of surveys detailing white worker opposition to black advancement, see Giliomee, "Afrikaner Politics 1977-87" pp.119-20, and Jochelson, "Unions and Right Wing Politics" pp.28-9.
34. See Kenny, A. "White Revolution" Frontline Johannesburg, June 1987, pp.33-35.
35. South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Survey 1981, p.184.
36. Jochelson, "Unions and Right-Wing Politics" p.28.
37. Kenny, "White Revolution" p.35.
38. For instance Kenny is quoted by Giliomee in "Afrikaner Politics 1977-87" and "White Worker Dissatisfaction With Wiehahn" Indicator SA Vol. 6 (4) Spring 1989, p.66.
39. See for instance, Pakendorf, H. "Speaking For the White Man" Frontline October 1988, pp.16-17. This interview with Philip Strauss, the general secretary of the Running and Operating Staff Union of the South African Transport Services revealed that he was on the Groot Raad of the AWB.
40. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development p.327.
41. On the use made of this legacy by Eugene Terre'Blanche

(leader of the paramilitary Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging) see Grobbelaar and Bekker, Vir Volk en Vaderland p.48.

42. South Africa's entry into the Great War on Britain's side was the occasion for a revolt aimed at restoring Afrikaner independence and expelling British imperialism. See Davenport, T.R.H. "The South African Rebellion of 1914" Economic History Review Vol. 77 (306) 1963, pp.73-94; Garson, N.G. "The Boer Rebellion of 1914" History Today Vol. 12 (1963) pp.132-9; Spies, S.B. The Rebellion in South Africa, 1914-15 Unpublished MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1963. For an account which locates the rebellion within a tradition of 'armed protest', interpreted in terms of class conflict, see Lacey, M. "'Platskiet Politiek': the Role of the Union Defence Force (UDF) 1910-24" in Cock, J. and Nathan, L. War and Society: the Militarisation of South Africa pp.28-39, especially pp.35-39.

43. On the relations between the National Party and the Ossewa Brandwag, see Roberts, M. and Trollip, A.E.G. The South African Opposition 1939-45 Cape Town, Longmans (1947) pp.75-112; Stultz, N.M. The Nationalists in Opposition 1934-48 Cape Town, Human and Rousseau (1974) pp.79-82; Furlong, P.J. Between Crown and Swastika Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press (1992).

44. On the 'low profile' of the Defence Force in the 1950s and 1960s see Grundy, The Militarization of South African Politics pp.8-9.

45. See Grundy, K. The Militarisation of South African Politics; Oxford, Oxford University Press (1988); Jaster, R. The Defence of White Power London, Macmillan (1988); Frankel, P. Pretoria's Praetorians Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1983).

46. Stadler refers to the Afrikanerisation of the armed forces as "...a bloodless purge.." Stadler, A. The Political Economy of Modern South Africa Cape Town, David Philip (1987), p.76. See also Wilkins, I. and Strydom, H. The Super Afrikaners Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball (1978) pp.116-119.

47. On the military response to township revolt see Nathan, L. "Troops in the Townships 1984-87" in Cock and Nathan, War and Society pp.67-78, and Sandler, D. "The Psychological Experiences of White Conscripts in Black Townships" in Cock and Nathan, War and Society pp.78-89.

48. On the use of covert military units by the South African authorities, see Pauw, J. In the Heart of the Whore: the Story of Apartheid's Death Squads Johannesburg, Southern Publishers (1991) and Laurence, P. Death Squads: Apartheid's Secret Weapon Harmondsworth, Penguin Books (1990).

49. On the AWB, see Kemp, A. Victory or Violence: the Story of the AWB Pretoria, Forma Publishers (1990); Zille, "The Right Wing in South African Politics" in Berger and Godsell, A Future South Africa pp.59-61; Bekker and Grobbelaar, Vir Volk and Vaderland pp.40-41 and pp.46-48.

50. On the Founding of the AWB, see Kemp, Victory or

Violence pp.2-3.

51. The incident, and the trial of its perpetrators, sparked off controversy in Afrikaner circles. See for instance "Covenant: Historical Evidence" Die Transvaler 24.1.80; "Professor van Jaarsveld Attacked in Church Publication", Beeld 24.1.80. Some AWB members who took part in the assault were disciplined by other Afrikaner organisations. See for example, "Go to AWB Says Voortrekker Movement" Rapport 27.1.80. The suit worn by Professor van Jaarsveld when he was tarred and feathered was presented to the Museum of Literature in Bloemfontein. See Die Volksblad 29.1.80. All translations the author's.

52. See for instance Stern, J.P. Hitler: the Führer and the People London, Fontana (new edition) 1984. Some of the themes through which Stern analyses Hitler's rhetoric -- "the representative individual" and "the authenticity of experience" for instance -- have a clear bearing on Terre'Blanche's.

53. One observer suggested that, "...the Conservative Party appears to have helped rescue the AWB from a fringe existence". See "Top of the AWB hate list: 'Anglo-Jewish money'" Weekly Mail 6-12 June 1986.

54. On the AWB and vigilantism, see South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) Annual Survey of Race Relations 1986 p.545. For Terre'Blanche's description of the Brandwag (sentry) vigilante group, see "Gearing for war: the AWB on patrol" Weekly Mail 28 February-6 March 1986. For later developments in training and tactics see SAIRR Annual Survey 1987-8 p.712. In addition to the vigilante organisation, the AWB had from 1984 a leader's bodyguard which is uniformed and armed. It was called Blitzcommando in 1984 and renamed Aquila in 1988. See SAIRR Annual Survey 1984 p.43 and "Armed AWB men on the march" Sunday Times 20.2.88.

55. See "Flattened: the shacks on white doorsteps" Weekly Mail 25-31 July 1986.

56. In 1983, several AWB members received sentences of from 2-15 years on charges of theft and illegal possession of arms and explosives. See SAIRR Annual Survey 1983 pp.28-9. The two who had been sentenced to 15 years resigned from the AWB before sentence. They were released in November 1987 at the same time as Mr. Govan Mbeki, two other ANC members and two members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). See SAIRR Annual Survey 1987-8 pp.712-3.

57. See for example the break up of National Party Meetings in Brits and Pietersburg in May 1986. The assaults on the meetings were spearheaded by the AWB's Stormvalke (Stormfalcons) elite paramilitary unit. See "The AWB has a long way to go" Weekly Mail 23-29 May 1986; "The arithmetic of a far-right victory" Weekly Mail 30 May-5 June 1986. On the AWB's tactic of taking over NP meetings, see "AWB warning: we are on the march!" Sunday Tribune 17.1.88. According to this report, Terre'Blanche demanded "...the people be given the democratic right to elect their own chairmen at meetings because 'the NP is the government and

we are the taxpayers'".

58. See for example, "AWB to get tough on right wing unity for poll" Citizen 26.1.87; "AWB unity offer gets cool reception" Star 12.2.87; "3000 right wingers shout 'ja' to AWB plea for unity" Star 5.3.87; See also "Eugene steps in to patch the right split" Weekly Mail 13-19 March 1987. For a summary see SAIRR Annual Survey 1987-8 p.710.

59. In February 1987, Terre'Blanche claimed that during 1986, "...the AWB had been feeding 14 000 poverty-stricken white children in Pretoria and Johannesburg", see SAIRR Annual Survey 1987-8. See also "Tant Susan, AWB distribute food" Pretoria News 30.4.88. In this report, the AWB claimed to be feeding 160 Afrikaner families twice a week. In October 1988, the AWB criticised the government for making a gift of grain to Malawi "while the AWB ran feeding schemes for white children in South Africa's cities"; "AWB chief warns NP, 'we are the rebellion'" Star 5.10.88.

60. See for example the AWB's four day 'devotional horse-ride' from Pretoria to Krugersdorp. At Paardekraal, they committed themselves to a 'New Covenant'. See Weekly Mail 28 November-4 December 1986. In May 1986, AWB supporters were prominent at Republic day ceremonies at the Voortrekker Monument. The crowd was estimated at 50 000, the 'biggest gathering of Afrikaners at the monument since the 1960 celebration of the republic referendum'. SAIRR Annual Survey 1986 p.140. See also "AWB warns not to tamper with the Day of the Vow" Citizen 27.5.87 and, "AWB attends overcrowded Vow service" Citizen 17.12.87.

61. Some commentators attribute the growth of the AWB in the mid-1980s to frustration at, "...the National Party Government closing off even those democratic avenues which once existed for whites". See Van Niekerk, P. "The arithmetic of a far-right victory" Weekly Mail 30 May-5 June 1986. Van Niekerk was pointing to the extension of the life of the white parliament by the 1983 constitution, the fact that a general election had not been held for over five years and the fact that the government could in theory carry on for a further three years. The centralising of decision-making, the downgrading of parliament and the provincial party congresses, and the overriding of white interest groups like trade and agricultural unions had the same effect.

62. See interview with Terre'Blanche, "The AWB will not run away" Pretoria News 25.6.88: "...we never used the party to fight elections. But it gives me the same privileges as a political party in terms of voters' lists, posters etcetera".

63. See Zille, "The Right Wing in South African Politics" p.60. On the relationship between the AWB and the Conservative Party, including examples of prominent Conservatives who are also active in the AWB, see "Die nuwe AWB...wil nou sy eie regse paadjie loop" Rapport 11.10.87.

64. On this point see "A political dreamer" Sunday Times 3.5.87.

65. For a summary of the policy see Zille, "The Right Wing in South African Politics" pp.73-4.

66. Zille, "The Right Wing in South African Politics" p.59. See this source also for a sketch of the AWB's organisational structure.

67. On these points see "Rightwing CP admits election failure' Southern African Report 3.11.89, p.7.

68. Natal Mercury 8.2.90.

69. On the first of the mass marches see "How many marched in Pretoria?" Star 17.2.90 (estimates varied between 5 000 and 75 000 with a substantial consensus between 20-30 000). On the CP's plan to make the public service a focus of mass action see "CP prepare for battle" Sunday Times 18.2.90. On the mood of militancy in the CP, with heavy emphasis on emerging links with paramilitary organisations, see 'Reg om te veg: gevaarlike geluide kom uit KP" Rapport 8.4.90.

70. See for instance "Launch of Third Struggle" Sunday Tribune 20.5.90.

71. The Sunday Times (27.5.90 "CP won't travel down FW's road of reform") estimated 65 000, and the Sunday Tribune (27.5.90 "No sign of twis as volk roars 'ja' to Dr. No"), 50 000.

72. See "CP won't travel down FW's road of reform". Dr. Treurnicht mentioned continued efforts to collect a million signatures, establishing a conservative newspaper, creating 'own' financial institutions. On the issue of creating vigilante groups, Treurnicht said whites had a right of self-defence, but that the role of the police should not be usurped.

73. Two others were held unopposed, Yeoville (Johannesburg) in April 1991, and Green Point (Cape Town) in August 1991. Both seats had been transformed into Democratic Party strongholds by the decision of the National Party not to contest them. See "NP, DP pact emerges" Star 24.1.91.

74. The others were Randburg (Johannesburg, November 1990), 10.3%; Maitland (Cape, March 1991) 9.7%; Virginia (Orange Free State, December 1991), 15%.

75. Figures quoted in The Citizen "Comment" (on the Randburg result), 9.11.90.

76. Even the 1989 whites-only election, which was held under very tight emergency legislation, provoked widespread and often violent protest. Under the relaxed conditions of the post-February 1990 dispensation, it would have been courting disaster to hold a whites-only general election.

77. See for instance Southern African Report 21.2.92 and Van Niekerk, P. "Aftermath of the Nats' Potch botch" Weekly Mail 21-27 February 1992.

78. A national survey carried out by Dr. Jannie Hofmeyer in February 1992, "showed that while the combined right wing outstripped the NP by 50% to 39% among Afrikaners, among English speakers de Klerk had the lead by 60% to 19%". See

"The CP: dammed if they do. And dammed if they don't".
Weekly Mail 28 February - 5 March 1992.

79. The CP's most notable success in attracting English-speakers was in the predominantly English-speaking, blue-collar, Durban constituency of Umlazi in the June 1990 by-election. Issues like the government expropriation of land for 'informal settlements' also gave the CP some purchase with English-speaking suburban voters on the Witwatersrand. See "Squatter fears drive English-speakers into the CP fold" Weekly Mail 13-19 March 1992. The referendum result suggested that these movements did not represent lasting attachments however.

80. See Grobbelaar, J. "'Bittereinders': Dilemmas and Dynamics of the Far Right" South African Review 6 Johannesburg, Ravan Press (1992) pp.102-111.

81. The contradictions and confusions of CP policy are discussed in "White man he speak with forked tongue..." Weekly Mail 13-19 March 1992.

82. See Grobbelaar, J. "The CP Broedertwis: Restanters and Volkstaters" Indicator SA Vol. 9 (3) Winter 1992 pp.17-20.

83. The divisions became public with the leaking of a strategy document by the party's chief information officer and strategy committee chairman, Koos van der Merwe. The document painted a picture (which with hindsight can be seen to be very accurate) of the CP's increasing irrelevance, unless it came to terms with the new terrain created by de Klerk's reforms. Mr. van der Merwe was dismissed from his party post in June 1991. For discussion see, for example, "Conservatives make damaging admissions" Southern African Report 19.4.91. "Secret CP plan to meet ANC" Sunday Tribune 14.5.91. "Koos's illustrates the divide among the conservatives" Sunday Tribune 23.6.91.

84. For interpretations of right-wing dilemmas after the referendum see Grobbelaar, "The CP Broedertwis: Restanters and Volkstaters"; Ebersohn, W. "Die regse opsie" Die Suid Afrikaan June-July 1992; du Toit, A. "Die regse stryd, of die trek is verby" Die Suid Afrikaan April-May 1992; Serfontein, H. "Nuwe regses bring skeuring in KP" Vrye Weekblad 31 July - 6 August 1992. Grobbelaar argues for the continued vitality of the bloc of right wing opinion which voted 'no', while du Toit, Ebersohn, and Serfontein are more dismissive.

85. See Taljaard, J. "United we say but divided we are" Weekly Mail 21-27 August 1992.

86. The CP was party to the founding of the Concerned South Africans Group (COSAG) in September 1992. This alliance of homelands leaders and the white right was prompted by Chief Minister Buthelezi's withdrawal from negotiations with the ANC and the government, angered at what he felt was collusion between the other two parties to put pressure on him. See Southern Africa Report 9.10.92. p.3.

87. See "One step forward, two steps back" Natal Mercury 25.8.92.

88. See for instance "CP ready to put a tiger in the tanks" Weekly Mail 2-7 April 1993.

89. Citizenship would be granted only to "...descendants of Afrikaners and other like-minded patriots who share the same destiny". Non-citizens would not be allowed to vote or own immovable property. See "Afrikaner Volkstat Blueprint" Natal Mercury 9.6.93.

90. See "CP unity won't survive Treurnicht" Weekly Mail 23-29 April 1993.

91. The emergence of the AVF will be discussed below.

92. Booyse, W. "The Extremist Right - Joke or Threat?" South Africa Foundation Review September 1990, p.7. Booyse names the Boerestaat Party (BSP) and its armed associate organisation the Boere Weerstandbeweging (BWB) as the "...largest composition of right wing elements", with the AWB somewhat in decline as a result of internal feuding. Since then, the AWB seems to have recovered, at least in terms of public profile. Neo-fascist and fundamentalist religious splinter groups now constitute a fanatical underground element on the right, of uncertain size but unquestionable viciousness.

93. For accounts see, for example, "Boere leër op die been" Rapport 22.4.90 and Sunday Star 22.4.90. The febrile atmosphere of these post-February months was much encouraged by the government-supporting Afrikaans press, and to a slightly lesser extent by the liberal English press.

94. Quoted in "Boere leër op die been" Rapport 22.4.90. See also the statement attributed to Piet Rudolph, "It is time to be armed but not to take up arms". Sunday Star 22.4.90.

95. The epicentre of the violence was the President Steyn mine, and it is likely that whites' fears were conditioned by the history of conflict there. 29 black miners were killed in December 1986 in clashes which were variously interpreted as "ethnic" or "union-busting", and ten died in renewed outbreaks in the last week of January 1987. See "NUM steps in as mine violence mediator" Business Day 30.1.1987 and "Ten more miner deaths" Weekly Mail 30 January - 6 February 1987.

96. For accounts see, for instance, "Wit myners wil staak oor beweerde geweld" Rapport 18.2.90; "Police shootings and right-wing upsurge pose a new threat on the road to negotiations" Southern African Report 25.5.90. For the white miners' point of view see "Skag sluit nà aanvalle op blanke werkers" Die Patriot 23.3.90. "Hostile reception in Welkom" Weekly Mail 30 March - 4 April, emphasises the township dimension of the turmoil, including protests over the closure of township schools during which there was a confrontation between protesters, white vigilantes and police.

97. For reports see Weekly Mail 4-10 May, 11-17 May, 18-24 May and 15-21 June 1990.

98. For Vlok's visit to Welkom see "Quiet Welkom waits for

Vlok" Star 10.5.90. and for Terre'Blanche's meeting with Vlok in Cape Town see "Eugene returns home a winner" Sunday Tribune 20.5.90.

99. See for example the arrest of 11 right wingers, including a former Conservative Party town councillor; "Assassination plot extremists arrested" Daily News 22.6.90. On the recovery of arms stolen from the security forces, see "City arms cache 'stolen from the army'" Star 11.7.90. This report details numerous other arrests.

100. See "Police have the right on the run" Sunday Star 14.10.90.

101. In April, Terre'Blanche had given Minister Vlok an ultimatum to remove the "squatters" within 30 days or the AWB would do it. "Conservatives should unite to kill ANC members if they invaded whites' homes or property and drive them 'from the farms to the homelands'. He said Ventersdorp could only provide jobs for 2 000 of the 9 000 squatters outside the town leaving 7 000 'to steal, rob and murder'" Natal Mercury 19.4.91.

102. Daily News 10.8.91.

103. See for instance, Institute of Criminology (UCT) Back to the Laager: the Role of White Right Wing Violence in South Africa Cape Town, University of Cape Town (1991) pp.103-114. The orientation of this publication is explicitly anti-government and pro-ANC.

104. Human Rights Commission Checkmate for Apartheid: Special Report on Two Years of Destabilisation July 1990-June 1992 Johannesburg, Human Rights Commission (1992), p.13. The Human Rights Commission has close links with the ANC.

105. See the emphasis on this point in Back to the Laager p.106.

106. Checkmate for Apartheid pp.2-14.

107. This contrasts with a figure of over 100% of deaths per incident for "vigilante related actions" (meaning in this case black vigilantes): 2 782 incidents, 5 060 deaths. The Human Rights Commission has frequently been criticised (notably by the Institute of Race Relations and Inkatha) for under-reporting the deaths of policemen, black councillors, Inkatha members and so on. Cogent as these criticisms are in other contexts, they are less pressing here, since it is particularly significant that an organisation so hostile to the right should report its activities at such a low level. If murders attributable to 'progressive' organisations were reported more fully, the white right's share of responsibility for the violence would be even more minimal than in the Human Rights Commission's statistics as they stand. The same is true for Back to the Laager which (though notably vague about its sources) probably used Human Rights Commission data. The impression of the right's role in the violence gained from these two sources is confirmed by the reports of more credibly objective organisations. See for instance the reports of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies

(University of Natal, Durban), published as South African Conflict Monitor. This chronicles all assaults by whites on blacks whether the perpetrators have any organisational links with the right or not. The clear impression given by these reports is of intensely localised (though widespread) violence often apparently random and spontaneous, with very few genuinely terrorist actions, and contributing only a very small fraction of injuries and deaths to the overall total. However, it should be noted that the Monitor does not tabulate numbers of deaths by categories of responsibility and it is not possible for the researcher to do so with confidence since there are gaps in its coverage, notably in the second half of 1990.

108. See for instance "Boere, blanke werkers teen regering" Die Patriot 21.2.90; "Werkers is keelvoll vir die regering" Die Patriot 13.4.90.

109. Phillip Strauss, general secretary of the Running and Operating Staff Union on the railways, quoted in "We've never seen the white workers so angry say the unions" Weekly Mail 2-8 March 1990. See also "Launch of the 'third struggle'" Sunday Tribune for an invocation of the power of "white key workers".

110. Interviewed in Sunday Tribune 23.2.92.

111. In 1990 for instance, a new whites-only union with close links to the AWB, the Transnet Union of Personnel, began to organise in the transport sector. See also "We've never seen the white workers so angry" Weekly Mail 2-8 March 1990 for the growth of militant unions.

112. Despite efforts going back to the mid-eighties, it has not yet proved possible to consolidate a white 'super union', although the white Mine Workers' Union now claims, "40 000 members in key positions in the economy including the mining, steel, chemical electrical, municipal, postal, and retail sectors". See "Call on white workers to unite or 'be buried'". Business Day 29.1.92.

113. There are two exceptions to this; the HNP's failed attempt to create a class conscious Afrikaner Nationalist Party, and the efforts of radical partitionist splinter groups to create white 'homelands' from the bottom up. Right up to the 1992 referendum, the mainstream of the right behaved as if the coalition which underpinned Nationalist rule could be reconstituted.

114. Henning, H. "Hard Times on the Platteland: the Erosion of White Farmers' Privilege" Cross Times (Cape Town) 11.2.91, pp.18-19. The following description of white agriculture relies extensively on this source.

115. The exemption of agriculture from the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1983) represented the continuing purchase of agriculture in the white polity, even in decline. Its extension to farm workers ten years later, illustrates the changed political terrain of the post-1990 period. For a summary of the issues involved see "Farmers seem set for labour showdown" Natal Mercury 31.3.93; "At last, legal

muscle for farm workers" Natal Mercury 30.4.93. See also "Farmers protest against extension of labour laws" Business Day 18.11.92 and "Union warns of explosive farming crisis" Natal Mercury 5.4.93.

116. Farmers were literally in the front line of the ANC's guerrilla struggle as it intensified during the 1980s. Integrated as they were into the security forces, farmers were regarded by the ANC as 'legitimate targets' (see for instance "One day on South Africa's most northern farm" Weekly Mail 25-31 July 1986). Clearly, this ethos has survived among radical blacks, despite its official abandonment by the ANC. It is very difficult objectively to disentangle crime from spontaneous and localised revenge and consciously-planned attacks by radical groups -- especially APLA -- nor to assess the contribution of radical rhetoric on the left of the ANC. All these elements, however, contribute to siege-like conditions for white farmers in many areas, especially on the borders of homelands and independent states. See for instance, "Farmers plan self-defence units to fight for survival" Sunday Times 5.5.91; "A dying breed: border farmers battle for survival as stock theft reaches crisis point" Sunday Tribune 19.1.92; "A week of farm terror" Sunday Times 2.5.93.

117. Hugo, P. "Frontier Farmers in South Africa" African Affairs Vol. 87 (349) Oct. 1988, pp.537-552, at p.539. See also "Towards Darkness and Death: Racial Demonology in South Africa" Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 26 (4) 1988, pp. 567-590. It should be noted that Hugo's attitude surveys, which reported deep-seated insecurities and fears among white farmers, were conducted among farmers who were among the most vulnerable to attack, unfavourable ecological and climatic conditions, and changes of government policy. It is likely that farmers in previously more secure areas are now experiencing the vulnerabilities of Hugo's 'frontier farmers'.

118. See Henning, "Hard Times on the Platteland". On at least two subsequent occasions, threats were made for similar, but more extensive mass action, without effect. See "Now farmers plan to disrupt whole country" Sunday Tribune 10.3.91. and "Farmers on the Warpath" Daily News 16.5.91.

119. See above, note 101. See also Sunday Tribune 12.5.91. and "Police shot farmers 'with good reason'" Natal Mercury 15.5.91.

120. Although it lobbied for continued special treatment for agriculture under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the South African Agricultural Union has been generally 'moderate' and supportive of the government. The Free State and Transvaal Agricultural Unions have been well to the right, led by prominent Conservative Party MPs, and have tried (unsuccessfully) to wrest control of the SAAU from its leadership. See "Right-wing 'coup' expected at SAAU congress" Natal Mercury 22.10.91.

121. For an account of these developments see "Short-lived day of the generals?" Weekly Mail 14-20 May 1993.

122. The main role appears to have been taken by General Tienie Groenewald, former head of military intelligence who took early retirement after the reforms of 1990. The others were Lt. General Lothar Neethling, former deputy commissioner of police, former chief of the South African Defence Force General Constand Viljoen and Lt. General Koos Bischoff, former army chief of operations. See Weekly Mail 30 April - 6 May 1993. The Sunday Times ("Generals plot with the right" 2.5.93) includes Col. Servas de Wet (retired police officer and commander of the AWB's military wing, the Wenkommando) in the group, but other accounts omit him. See for instance, "New front will unite right wing" Daily News 5.5.93. This version refers to a larger "committee of generals" including two more police officers of general rank. For an interview with Genl. Groenewald, see "Call goes out to the generals" Daily News 7.5.93. For interviews with Genl. Viljoen see "General Viljoen speaks" Weekly Mail 14-20 May 1993 and Sparks, A. "Boer from the bush unites the wild right" Observer 16.5.93.

123. Accounts vary from "more than 100 right-wing political and splinter groups" (Sunday Times 2.5.93) to "at least 40 groups with thousands of members" (Daily News 5.5.93), as the extent of the front's representation.

124. See "Right-wingers vow to wage war" Natal Mercury 7.5.93; "Thousands of farmers threaten to break labour laws" Daily News 6.5.93; "The khaki-clad farmers bellow their cries of pain" Sunday Tribune 9.5.93.

125. See for instance "SAP unveils plan to combat crime" Daily News 26.3.93. The plan includes "...The provision of 'additional support' to farmers for their protection, and the extension of Government subsidies to farmers so that they can improve farm security through alarm systems, fencing and communication instruments such as Marnet and Citizen band radios".

126. On these points see "Short-lived day of the generals?" Weekly Mail 14-20 May 1993.

127. Developments along these lines took place in August and September 1993 with bilateral talks between the AVF and the government and the AVF and the ANC.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BREAK UP OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION

In 1968, the Unionist Party had been in power in Northern Ireland for 47 years. As long as a majoritarian Westminster system of government and a first-past-the post electoral system prevailed there, as long as political cleavages were organised almost exclusively along sectarian lines, as long as British governments allowed a substantial degree of autonomy to devolved institutions and as long as Catholic opposition remained weak and divided, there was no apparent impediment to Unionist unity and Unionist government in perpetuity.

As outlined in previous chapters, all these premises ceased to be valid between 1968 and 1974, and the forces which made up the Ulster Unionist coalition could no longer be contained within a single political party. Although Protestants have retained an effective veto over far-reaching political change and drastic alterations to their identity and status, these forces have never been reassembled into anything more than temporary confederations. It has never proved possible to deliver an organised bloc representing all shades of Unionist interest and opinion for anything more taxing than a discordant and ragged chorus of "No!". It is true that dramatic, concerted action has proved possible, notably in the Ulster Workers'

Council (UWC) strike of 1974. But even this impressive demonstration of political power could not provide a platform for a renewed closing of ranks on unity's old bases, or under the leadership of newly-emergent forces.

The breakup of the Unionist coalition took two principal forms. The first was a struggle for the formal constitutional expression of Protestants' interests. To begin with, the site of this struggle was the Unionist Party itself, broadening later to a contest between it and rival parties. The second source of fragmentation was provided by extra-parliamentary groups capable of sectarian mobilisation either at the work-place or on a territorial basis. Their contribution was direct action sometimes in alliance with, at others in rivalry with the formal political parties. Politicians sometimes needed the mobilising potential of workers and paramilitaries, not to mention the threat of chaos that their industrial and violent actions could bring. Workers and paramilitaries in turn needed the legitimacy that elected office could confer (especially when they found it so hard to achieve themselves), along with the channels to the British state that the politicians could open. But all sides had good reason to be suspicious of each other. They appealed to different constituencies, and, (tactical exigencies apart), their views on ends and means were fundamentally antithetical. The striking fact is that no integrated mass movement emerged to gather up the energies and direct the frustrations and fears of Protestants.

What the political parties and other groups had in common and which allowed their ad hoc cooperation, is generally conveyed in the portmanteau term 'loyalism'. It will be useful at this point to define and discuss the term, which can be made to cover a whole range of Protestant political positions.

The most important point to be made is that the object of loyalty in loyalism is not indivisible. Indeed it is so many-faceted that the concept can easily appear self-contradictory.¹ The principal contradiction arises over whether the focus of loyalty is to Britain, or to the loyalists themselves.² Loyalty to Britain involves the acceptance of institutions like the monarchy and parliament as sources of authority and objects of allegiance, and was a prominent part of moderate or reforming Unionism. O'Neill, Chichester-Clark and Faulkner all in their various ways stressed the importance of conforming to the Government of Ireland Act which clearly reserved authority to the British parliament. Indeed it was on the question of Westminster's constitutional authority that O'Neill asked for William Craig's resignation.³

This metropolitan focus is much less important however in what has come to be known as loyalism. It is the loyalist community itself, sometimes given an ethnic cast, sometimes a religious emphasis, which is the focus of loyalty. Moderate or reforming Unionism violated this notion of solidarity, this community of the faithful. By accepting British leadership, by espousing modernising and ecumenical rhetoric, by dismissing those who did not accept reform as fringe extremists and archaic backwoodsmen, the reformers were committing acts of betrayal. For good measure, these attitudes often aggravated class-based, populist grievances. In practice, loyalism has come to define the political position of those who, since the imposition of Direct Rule in 1972, have campaigned for the restoration of an autonomous parliament and government for Northern Ireland, which will reflect in their composition the fact that there is a substantial majority of Protestants in the population. Loyalists also vigorously reject the view which is held by

constitutional Nationalists, that in any Northern Ireland settlement there must be provision for all-Ireland institutions -- an 'Irish Dimension'.

On this basis, it has been clear since at least February 1974 that loyalists, in this sense, have constituted a substantial majority of Northern Ireland Protestants. But there are other dimensions to be considered. Loyalism has also come to mean an aggressive disposition to use unconstitutional direct action, to frustrate a settlement which does not embody the above conditions, and to use force as deterrent or reprisal in response to Irish Republican violence. These positions and the populist rhetoric of resentment and betrayal which goes with some strands of loyalism, can under most circumstances, count on much less substantial support than the basic loyalist position outlined above.

Allowing for these important differences of emphasis, loyalism as defined above has been the principal force in the break-up of the Unionist coalition. It is necessary now to look at this process of disintegration by examining first its constitutional and then its extra-parliamentary dimensions.

Political Parties and the Break Up of the Ulster Unionist Coalition⁴

It is not easy to summarise the lineage of the various political parties and groupings of parties which have competed for the right to be the authentic representatives of Northern Ireland's Protestant majority since 1968. The fissiparous representation common to communities in crisis has been aggravated by the multiplicity of elections and electoral systems which has marked the search for a solution

in the wake of the collapse of two systems of government -- Stormont and the Northern Ireland Assembly. In fact, since 1968 there have been over twenty sets of elections in Northern Ireland, including those to four devolved electoral bodies (the Stormont Parliament, the 1973 Assembly, the 1975 Convention, and the 1982 Assembly), those to Westminster, and those to the European Parliament.⁵ Throughout these contests, parties, splinters and temporary coalitions have aligned and re-aligned to compete for Protestant votes under a bewildering variety of names and acronyms.

Despite this, the main movements can be reduced to three. Firstly, the Unionist Party lost support to right and left in trying to come to terms with the legacy of O'Neillism and reformist pressure from British governments, which increasingly diluted Unionist autonomy. Secondly, the Ulster Vanguard Movement (1972-1978), led by William Craig, failed in its attempt to recreate a unionist coalition which would embrace parliamentary and extra-parliamentary groups and unite all shades of Protestant opinion and interest. Thirdly, the Reverend Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, which was not a splinter of the Unionist party, but an independent alternative from its beginning, has advanced from fringe status to be a serious rival to the Unionist Party in what has been since the mid-seventies a two-party competition for Protestant votes.

The Post-O'Neill Unionist Party

The first phase in the breakup of the Unionist coalition involved the phenomenon of O'Neillism, reaching a high point with the chord this reforming position struck in the wider community, exemplified by O'Neill's 'Ulster at the Crossroads' speech and the foundation of the New Ulster Movement. The opposition to O'Neill embraced ministerial

resignations and dismissals, backbench revolt and the contest for Unionist votes between pro- and anti-O'Neill candidates in the February 1969 Stormont general election. The defeat of O'Neill in the aftermath of the election's inconclusive result and in an atmosphere of escalating community strife, did not mean the end of reform, but neither of his two successors could be regarded as reformers by conviction. Certainly, neither could be regarded as a leader who could transform Unionism into a movement capable of commanding legitimacy and support from all sections of the community. As a result, those forces which had briefly grouped around O'Neill moved away from the Unionist Party and formed the bi-confessional Alliance Party in April 1970, thus removing the most convinced and advanced reformers from the party.

An unmistakable air of the temporary hung over the administration of Major James Chichester-Clark, O'Neill's kinsman and successor. Certainly Chichester-Clark himself showed neither appetite nor aptitude for the job. However, it is unlikely that a better-equipped leader could have done much more to cope with the unbroken run of disasters which Chichester-Clark faced. In August 1969 continuing civil disorder led to the confrontation between police and Catholic residents in Londonderry which became known as the siege of the Bogside. This was the spark needed to ignite communal conflict which had been smouldering throughout the spring and summer on the boundaries of Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast. After serious rioting and attacks by Protestants on Catholic areas which left many houses burned, British troops were called into both cities.

The August 1969 riots exposed the fragility of the Northern Ireland state in a number of ways. The inability of the police to restore order, or even to contain the disorder,

suggested that the state might, with more determined effort, be overthrown completely. Catholics could feel that they had won a great victory symbolised by the fact that their various ad hoc citizens' defence associations were negotiating directly with the British Army. Certain Catholic areas of Belfast and Londonderry became 'no-go areas' and have never to this day returned to control through 'normal policing' by the state. The most important legacy of August 1969 however was in the changed relationship between the Northern Ireland government and the British state. The autonomy of the Northern Ireland government was not officially at an end, but its foreclosure was there for all to see in the joint statement (the 'Downing Street Declaration'⁶) issued by the two governments on August 19, pledging specific reforms and principles of equal citizenship for all citizens of Northern Ireland. More important than this demonstration was the question of the responsibility for security. Another communique underlined Northern Ireland's dependent status in unmistakable terms;

..the GOC Northern Ireland, Lt-Gen Sir Ian Freeland, would 'with immediate effect assume overall responsibility for security operations'. For other than 'normal police duties outside the field of security', he gained full control of the deployment and tasks of the RUC; additionally, he assumed 'full command and control of the Ulster Special Constabulary for all purposes'.⁷

Even worse was to come with the swift ordering, completion and publication, of a commission of enquiry into the RUC (the Hunt Report⁸) in October 1969. This recommended the civilianising of the RUC and the disbandment of the 'B' Specials in favour of a part-time, locally-recruited regiment of the British Army, the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). The release of the report's recommendations led to

rioting in the Protestant Shankill Road area of Belfast, and the death of the first RUC member to be killed since the beginning of the violence. This quintessentially loyalist event effectively dramatises the conflicts of identity inherent in loyalism as a position. Confirmation that Protestant militancy and dissidence was not confined to sporadic street disorders was furnished by electoral victories won by the Rev. Ian Paisley and one of his followers.⁹ If the disturbances of August 1969 had opened a crack between the Unionist rank and file and their government, and another between the Northern Ireland and British governments, the lever which widened these rifts was the renewed IRA campaign which began to gather momentum in 1970-71, with the split into Provisional and Official wings of the republican movement.

Chichester-Clark resigned in March 1971 against the background of a severely deteriorating security situation.¹⁰ His successor, Brian Faulkner was an abler individual and a more considerable force both inside and outside the Unionist Party. He had credentials as a hardliner, having resigned from O'Neill's cabinet, and further back, during the 1956-62 IRA campaign, he had been minister of home affairs, responsible for administering the Special Powers Act, and specifically internment without trial. Although a wealthy businessman, his background was not aristocratic and metropolitan, but authentically grassroots Orange. His aim was to bring in whatever minimum of reforms would satisfy the British without alienating the Unionist majority. At the same time he would prosecute a vigorous security policy, gambling on the hope that this, and his reputation for grassroots authenticity, would stabilise the situation in the Unionist Party.

Under Faulkner, as the violence continued to increase, it became clear that the most important dynamic was no longer inter-communal tension, but the IRA's guerrilla campaign. This narrowed to virtually nothing the ground on which political reform might be negotiated. Faulkner's modest proposals for Catholic participation in government were completely overturned by events when two Catholics were shot dead by the British Army in disputed circumstances in Londonderry. The SDLP, the mainly Catholic opposition in Stormont and the object of Faulkner's initiative, walked out.

In the absence of political progress, Faulkner turned to the security arm of his policy and introduced internment without trial under the Special Powers Act in August 1971. The political and security effects of internment for the Stormont and Westminster governments were severe. Violence rose to unprecedented heights and virtually the entire Catholic community was alienated because it seemed clear that the intelligence on which internment was applied was often faulty. Many men innocent of involvement with the IRA were picked up and severely ill-treated. What is more, at first no Protestant extremists were picked up, giving the operation a decidedly sectarian aspect. As a result, the IRA received a large influx of recruits and a welcome injection of credibility as defenders and revengers of wronged Catholics. The SDLP was placed under enormous pressure not to co-operate either with the Stormont or Westminster governments. Above all, the violence increased;

Between internment and the end of 1971, 146 people were killed, including 47 members of the security forces, and 99 civilians, and there were 729 explosions and 1 437 shooting incidents.¹¹

The central political point about internment is that it was the last chance for the Stormont government, the system of devolved rule on which it rested, and the Unionist Party whose *raison d'être* was to administer that system. If internment failed, there were no other initiatives, political or security, which could win breathing space for negotiated reform, short of direct rule from Westminster. This was duly imposed in March 1972 after the events of 'Bloody Sunday'¹² in Londonderry had graphically illustrated the dangerous and intractable cul-de-sac of current political and security policies.

Direct Rule was another of the central events around which the crisis in Northern Ireland has turned. What the communal violence of August 1969, internment, and Bloody Sunday were to Catholics, Direct Rule was to Protestants. It removed their political autonomy, but, by continuing to regard 'Northern Ireland' as the essential unit for which a solution must be found, continued to respect the ambiguous phenomenon of Protestant self-determination. It brought forward the confusions and contradictions of loyalism's mixture of allegiance and dissidence. While it united Protestants in opposition, it also served to highlight the splits in Unionism, and if anything, accelerated the dispersal of the Unionist coalition. Up to this point, the crisis of Unionism had been manifest mainly in a struggle for control of the Ulster Unionist Party. In the atmosphere of unresolved ambiguity which followed Direct Rule, this contest was overshadowed (though not ended) by the growth of Protestant worker and paramilitary organisations, and the emergence of rival political parties as serious contenders for Protestants' votes.

Although the Unionist Party had shed its most committed reformers long before Direct Rule, British pressure and

tutelage moved Faulkner, the former hardliner, into acceptance of reform positions far in advance of any O'Neill dreamt of. Faulkner's party did not appreciate this irony however, and he was unable to take more than a minority of Unionists with him. This final split took place between Direct Rule and the Ulster Workers' Strike in 1974, a period dominated by Britain's efforts to widen the basis of consent to local state institutions so that devolved government would again be possible for Northern Ireland. This process led to the British government's White Paper of March 1973 which proposed a 78-member Assembly elected by proportional representation, from which a power-sharing executive would be drawn. To satisfy the nationalist aspirations of the Catholic minority, a Council of Ireland was proposed. This would create an All-Ireland statutory framework in which matters of common interest to the Republic and Northern Ireland could be dealt with.

Elections held for the Assembly in June 1973 reflected the divided reaction of Unionists to the proposals. Unionists took 50 out of the 78 seats, but they were split into five groupings. 24 Official Unionists were returned, but of these only 14 sided with Faulkner in approval of the White Paper. This meant that with the other 26 Unionists divided between unofficial Unionists and three loyalist groups (Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, Craig's Vanguard Unionists and the West Belfast Loyalist Coalition), there was a heavy anti-White Paper majority among Unionists. A majority for power-sharing was created however, by the addition of 19 SDLP, eight Alliance and one Northern Ireland Labour Party member to the Faulkner Unionists.

The spectacle of a leader of the Unionist Party reduced to reliance on the votes of Catholic nationalists for a majority was a difficult one for most Unionists to swallow,

and its significance was not lost on them. On 7 July, the "Unpledged Unionists"¹³ asked the secretary of state for Northern Ireland to regard them as a separate group, emphasising that Faulkner could not be regarded as their leader. On the same day, William Craig chose an Orange walk in Glasgow to proclaim that the loyalists and Unpledged Unionists had reached agreement to wreck the Assembly. For his part, the Rev. Ian Paisley, speaking in a hardline loyalist area in Co. Derry said that "..the sell-out by O'Neill, Chichester-Clark and Faulkner is over.." and that loyalists were determined to save the country.¹⁴

The early meetings of the Assembly were marked by loyalist disruption of procedures, and by co-operation between the pro-White Paper parties to defeat loyalist motions. During October and November agreement was reached on the composition of the power-sharing Executive.¹⁵ Faulkner's position was increasingly beleaguered. At an Ulster Unionist Council meeting on 20 November, a motion calling for repudiation of power-sharing was defeated, but an amendment proposed by Faulkner himself was passed by only ten votes (379-369).¹⁶ Loyalist opposition to power-sharing grew even sharper when it became clear that anti-Executive groupings would not be invited to forthcoming tripartite talks between British, Irish and Northern Ireland representatives. These discussions were intended to seal the new system of government for Northern Ireland. There were outbreaks of violence in the Assembly with Faulkner's Unionists being abused and physically attacked and police called to remove loyalist members.¹⁷

The tripartite talks took place at Sunningdale in Berkshire (6-9 December 1973). The resulting agreement covered three main areas; the status of Northern Ireland; the acknowledgement of an all-Ireland dimension to politics and

administration by the provision of a Council of Ireland on which representatives from both sides of the border could co-operate at ministerial and assembly level; and measures to bring to justice those accused of crimes of violence wherever in Ireland they were committed.¹⁸

The Sunningdale Agreement was rejected by the Ulster Unionist Council (427 votes to 364) and Faulkner resigned the leadership. Although he retained the support of the Unionist members of the Assembly who had previously voted for him, the vast majority of party members and voters remained with what came to be known (and remains called to this day) the Official Unionist Party (OUP). Its first leader was Mr. Harry West, one of the first MPs to have opposed O'Neill's earliest efforts to change the direction of the Unionist Party.

With the failure of the Executive and Assembly at the hands of the Ulster Workers' Council strike in May 1974, the power-sharing, or reforming Unionists did not disperse, as the followers of O'Neill had done, but constituted themselves as the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI). This however was clearly a rump party and although it survived Faulkner's withdrawal from politics in 1976 and his death in a hunting accident in 1977, it made little electoral headway. Its precarious existence was wound up in 1981. The OUP cooperated closely with the loyalists of Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and Craig's Vanguard Unionists, forming the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) with them to fight the Sunningdale Agreement in the February 1974 Westminster general election. This contest, fortuitously for the loyalists, was called unexpectedly as a result of the Conservative government's conflict with the British coal miners. By ensuring that only one anti-Sunningdale candidate stood in each constituency, the UUUC

won 11 of the 12 seats, taking 50.8% of the vote, as against 13.1% for the pro-Assembly Unionists. After initial hesitation, the UUUC also co-operated with the loyalist workers and paramilitaries in the strike which brought down the Executive.

The defeat and resignation of Faulkner might have paved the way for a re-constituted Unionist Party to act again as the centrepiece of a coalition representing all Protestant identities and aspirations. Despite the common front against Sunningdale and the Assembly however, the various Unionist and loyalist parties and groups kept their separate identities and their co-existence ever after was marked by competition as well as cooperation. The free rein given by the crises of Unionism to strains of populism and class resentment, religious fundamentalism, proto-nationalism and paramilitarism, could no longer be accommodated in a single party. Above all the collapse of the old Unionist system's autonomy and access to patronage meant the end of the Unionist Party as the sole vehicle for the expression of Protestants' political identity.

Ulster Vanguard and the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party

Ulster Vanguard was set up in February 1972 to provide an umbrella for the various strands of right-wing Unionist resistance to reform, and the Unionists' loss of autonomy to British direction and control, especially in security policy, which culminated in the imposition of Direct Rule one month later.¹⁹ The leading figure in Vanguard was William Craig, the most prominent dissident in the Unionist Party. From the beginning, Vanguard had a somewhat anomalous nature. In some respects it was a pressure group whose purpose was to capture (or recapture) the Unionist Party for a more explicitly loyalist conception of Protestant identity

and the relationship with Britain. In other respects it was the medium of expression for political forces which were not compatible at all with Unionism as traditionally conceived. This dissonance was made plain in the relationships between Vanguard and the loyalist worker and paramilitary groups with whom it had close though not invariably harmonious relationships.²⁰

Endemic to Ulster Vanguard (and indeed to the phenomenon of loyalist mobilisation as a whole) was the aspiration of worker-based organisations to create a left-of-centre loyalist political party. This created tensions between the largely middle and lower-middle class right wing Unionists who gave Vanguard its political direction, and their working class partners in the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). These respectable right-wing elements were also ambivalent about the paramilitaries, whose mobilising power they needed, particularly at the launch of the movement, and subsequently in election campaigns, but whose violence and criminality brought them into disrepute. The essential contradiction remained that Vanguard could not mobilise effectively without the workers and paramilitaries, yet association with them made impossible the recapture of mainstream Unionism, and especially the Unionist Party itself.

This was not the only source of contradiction. Running counter to Vanguard's function as a launching pad back into the Unionist mainstream was its apparent encouragement of resistance to British leadership and control, which might be taken as far as a Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The break between Craig and O'Neill came over this very issue and especially in the aftermath of Direct Rule, Vanguard became closely associated with nationalist and separatist sentiments. In fact, the movement's statements on

the issue do not reflect a strong drive for independence at all,²¹ and they reflect a somewhat incoherent blend of threats and reassurances. Nevertheless, the popular association of Vanguard with the idea of an Ulster, rather than a British identity was a strong one, lending it the character of a new, potentially radical political force.

To some extent these contradictions were assuaged when Vanguard was transformed into a fully-fledged political party;

The formation of the Vanguard Unionist Party in March 1973 was a partial admission that the umbrella concept was unworkable. It also reflected disillusionment that the Unionist Party could be changed from within after that party had authorised Brian Faulkner to negotiate with Britain on her power-sharing proposals like negotiated independence, dominion status or a federal British Isles. The toning down of its anti-Britishness and its paramilitary links also made it a more acceptable partner for other loyalist parties..²²

Despite some successes in the NI Assembly (1973), Westminster (1974) and NI Convention (1975) elections, the VUPP was never able to settle on a distinctive position which would locate it firmly in the competition for influence which followed the breakup of the Unionist Party. Craig himself never seemed to free himself of the aspiration to return in triumph to lead something like the old Unionist Party. He did in fact return in 1977, but it was a less than triumphant homecoming. During the Convention of 1975-6 he split the VUPP by proposing voluntary coalition with Catholic parties as a way out of the political impasse. Craig had been overcome by the same trend that finished Faulkner -- a hardliner moves to a more flexible position for pragmatic reasons and is repudiated by his followers.

Although Craig remained in politics into the 1980s, neither he nor Vanguard had any substantial influence after the split.

Paisley, Paisleyism and the Democratic Unionist Party²³

The nature and depth of the crisis in Ulster Unionism is tellingly revealed by the Rev. Ian Paisley's progress from the margins of religious extremism to be the most durable and visible (certainly the most audible) Protestant political leader in Northern Ireland. It is tempting to conclude that only in times of profound crisis can an individual who is so self-consciously and determinedly an outsider gain such significant purchase in a social and political milieu which in 'normal' times has been heavily dominated by conventional, hierarchical and 'establishment' views of what is acceptable in a leader.

Paisley represents the very epitome of a charismatic²⁴ outsider, owing nothing to social position or networks of class-based influence. In a society which places great influence on access to academic education, Paisley is a complete outsider -- having failed the scholarship exam for grammar school, he was the product of evangelical bible colleges and his degrees are from sources which are derided by the British university elite.²⁵ This quality of being an outsider might be a drawback in a time of relative tranquillity or security, when formal elites are considered to be controlling the situation and reproducing favourable conditions for the client groups in the coalition which they lead. But in a time of crisis when elites are unable to control the situation, and succumb to external forces, the outsider is untainted by association with established authority. His 'years in the wilderness', spent denouncing backsliding leaders, bestow on him the mantle of prophetic

authority; he alone could foresee the dangers which the ruling elite either ignored, argued away, or insisted could only be contained by compromise.²⁶

This quality of being outside formal elites is reinforced by the fact that, quite early in his career, Paisley managed to antagonise three of the four main establishment powers in Unionism, the Orange Order, the Presbyterian Church and the Unionist Party.²⁷ With what seemed an almost perversely disputatious talent for fission, he seemed destined to remain a maverick, able to appeal only to the fringes of his natural constituency. Not only were his views extreme, but he appeared unable to compromise with those in power.

The outsider's vantage point and world view which background and temperament bestowed on him, meant that anti-elitism is one of Paisley's strongest characteristics. Firstly, it can be expressed in the popular mythology of betrayal in which the people themselves have to be ready to take matters into their own hands -- like the Apprentice Boys of Derry -- in case their leaders waver. Secondly, anti-elitism can be expressed in a culture of political and religious authenticity, in which truths are available to all, irrespective of education and status in the community. Where individuals' special qualities of leadership are recognised (as of course in Paisley himself), the emphasis is on God-given extraordinary qualities, rather than those which might be displayed in an upward rise through the Establishment.

Paisley's anti-elitism has also been able to feed on class-based resentments of working-class Protestants in both rural and urban areas, although as we shall see, this quality ceased quite early to be central to Paisleyism. These resentments were of two kinds. Firstly, there was the resentment felt that the Unionist Party was the preserve of

the middle and upper classes, despite the fraternal nature of its ideology. This resentment was part of all loyalist discontent with the party during the breakup of the Unionist coalition. Secondly, there was the resentment which was the product of poor living conditions and unemployment among Protestants. Although Catholics are more likely to be unemployed or live in poor housing conditions than Protestants, because the latter are in a majority, "...there are more poor Protestants than poor Catholics..."²⁸. This resentment has been made all the greater because of the tendency of the British media, especially during the Civil Rights campaign to focus on specifically Catholic grievances, and to represent Protestants as a privileged ruling class.

Paisley's career and the phenomenon of 'Paisleyism' represent the partial emergence into autonomous political expression of two strains of Protestant identity which, prior to the crisis brought on by O'Neill's reforms, were integrated into the Unionist coalition and subsumed under traditional Unionist leadership. These are religious fundamentalism and lower-class populism. The emergence of Paisleyism, however, also reveals the difficulties of co-existence between the two, and of either reaching full, radical, autonomous expression. In Paisleyism, the dilemma between cultivating full expression for hitherto integrated (or even shackled) social forces, and trying to attract the widest range of class and religious support in defence of an ethnic identity, are particularly well caught.

When in August 1968 the first civil rights march greatly raised the stakes in the confrontations between opposition, reform and reaction, the Rev. Ian Paisley was already well known as a preacher and protester. From the establishment of its first congregation in 1946, his Free Presbyterian Church

had grown to over twenty in 1968, mainly in rural areas of those counties (Antrim and Down) with the largest Protestant majorities. The extremity of his anti-Catholic rhetoric made him an eye-catching figure, even by Ulster's standards of evangelical rhetoric. Although such denunciations formed a staple part of his preaching, when it came to politics, Paisley was less concerned with romanism and republicanism, the palpable enemies without, than with the enemies within. These were the ecumenical movement and all other manifestations of liberal Protestantism, and in the Unionist Party, all signs of reformist or conciliatory tendencies.

Although he was active in unionist electoral politics as early as 1949, Paisley soon forsook established party structures for agitation in extra-parliamentary groups. These included the National Union of Protestants (NUP) and Ulster Protestant Action (UPA). The concerns of these groups of street agitators included the alleged encroachment of Catholics (buying property, opening businesses) on 'Protestant' areas, and another manifestation of 'territoriality', the question of the right to fly flags and hold processions in various areas. Both also advocated preferential employment policies for Protestants, a long-standing issue in unemployment-prone Belfast. There was an element of preparation for self defence in the UPA, which was set up just at the beginning of the IRA offensive in late 1956. It was organised largely at the workplace, and in its paramilitary and worker aspects, it was a forerunner of the Protestant direct action groups which were to play such an important role from the early 1970s onwards.

Paisley's involvement in direct action politics was taken a step further in the formation of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC) and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV) in 1966. This was a year of marked

sectarian tension, the fiftieth anniversary respectively of the Easter Rising in Dublin, and the sacrifice of Carson's UVF at the Battle of the Somme as the 36th (Ulster) Division of the British army. The UCDC was a product of these communal tensions, its main function being to organise counter-demonstrations to republican celebrations of the Rising. The UPV provided the manpower and the province-wide organisation for a show of strength at any meeting or parade called by Paisley. These self-styled loyalist groups gave Paisley a ready-made base on which to build his campaign of counter-demonstrations when, in 1968, the civil rights campaign began in earnest.

Paisley's brand of evangelical Protestantism laid great stress on street preaching, marches and demonstrations.²⁹ In this respect, his religious activities fused effortlessly with Ulster's political culture of parades and ritual display. These tactics were deployed wholesale in Paisley's campaign to intimidate the Civil Rights Movement and the Unionist government. The report of the Cameron Commission into the disturbances of 1968 concludes;

It is our considered opinion that these counter-demonstrations were organised under the auspices of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers and that their true purpose was to cause the legal prohibition of the proposed Civil Rights or People's Democracy demonstrations by the threat of a counter-demonstration, or if this move failed, to harass, hinder, and if possible to break up the demonstration. It must have been quite apparent to Dr. Paisley at least, that in the existing state of the law and having regard to the strength of the police, and to political realities in Northern Ireland, it would not be practicable to prevent congregation or concentration of 'loyalists' or to disperse them once gathered together on the route or in the vicinity of a proposed

Civil Rights demonstration meeting or
march.³⁰

The Report goes on to say that Paisley had to bear, "...a heavy share of direct responsibility for the disorders .. and also for inflaming passions and engineering opposition to lawful, and what in all probability otherwise would have been peaceful demonstrations.³¹ While these direct action organisations served Paisley well in both street and electoral confrontations, recruitment to them brought in lawless elements which were to embarrass Paisley. Despite the violence of his rhetoric and his willingness to mobilise followers for obstruction and intimidation, Paisley strove hard to maintain a public distinction between constitutional and violent action, a nicety not always appreciated by his supporters.

It was the uncertainties and contradictions of the O'Neill period which turned Paisley from a fringe agitator into a serious political figure, and, although he has never forgotten the theatrical possibilities of this milieu, translated him from the street to parliament. His considerable presence has been projected into Stormont (1970-72) and the various short-lived assemblies which followed Direct Rule in 1972, into Westminster (from 1970) and the European Parliament (from 1979). This individual success has been matched by the advance of the Free Presbyterian Church, and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) which Paisley has led since its formation in 1971. The DUP has emerged as an effective challenge to the Official Unionist Party, and alternative focus for Protestant political representation and loyalties. O'Leary refers to the "...intense and volatile competition between the UUP and the DUP for hegemony within the declining Unionist bloc" and notes the DUP's growth at the expense of the UUP,³² a trend

which was checked in the early 1980s and again after DUP militancy failed to break the Anglo-Irish Agreement after 1985. Nonetheless, these two parties attract the votes of the whole Unionist population, in a stable two party competition.³³

In some respects the significance of the DUP for interpretations of the breakup of the Unionist coalition, lies not so much in what it has become, but in what it has not become. To illustrate this argument, it is necessary to describe the circumstances of its foundation.

Paisley's first forays into electoral politics took place under the banner of the Protestant Unionist Party (PUP). Four candidates stood in the Belfast Corporation elections under this title in 1964, and in the 1969 Stormont election, Paisley and five others used it. In 1970, Paisley and the Rev. William Beattie were successful in Stormont by-elections, while Paisley himself won the North Antrim seat in the Westminster election as a Protestant Unionist candidate.

The PUP relied heavily on the UCDC, the UPV, and the Free Presbyterian Church³⁴ and was more of a protesting sect than a party. It was the confluence of this organisation, with a disaffected Unionist backbencher, Desmond Boal, that saw the foundation of the Democratic Unionist Party in September 1971.

Boal is most usually described as 'enigmatic'.³⁵ Certainly he clearly represents some of the contradictions and frustrations of Unionist populism, especially those which arise from any kind of radical position. Accounts of Boal's background and political career stress his allegedly 'humble' background, his intellectual brilliance, and the

'self-made' quality of his education and career as a barrister. Despite his establishment education and career, he shared Paisley's distrust of elites and his identification with Unionism's submerged groups.³⁶ Boal was MP for the Stormont constituency of Shankill, the Protestant working-class heartland, and he is generally seen in the tenacious tradition of radical unionists, who, while solid on the questions of Protestant identity and opposition to a united Ireland, and dependably anti-socialist, have agitated against the subordination of working class interests in the Unionist coalition. At an early stage in his career, he was deprived of the party whip for criticising Brookeborough's policy (or lack of it) on unemployment, and demanding radical measures to protect the working class. He was also the only Unionist MP ever to vote against capital punishment and he proposed socialist policies like the nationalisation of the Lough Neagh fisheries.

Boal foresaw in the confusion of the O'Neill and immediate post-O'Neill periods the loosening and imminent breakup of the Unionist class coalition. He wanted to take advantage of these developments to form a party which would remain firm on the constitutional issue, but would reflect the interests and the participation of the Protestant masses more faithfully. In order to do this, he co-founded the DUP with Paisley, hoping to capitalise on Paisley's charisma, grass-roots organisation and anti-elitism, while grafting onto it a radical social programme and participatory institutional framework. In this way, Paisley's undoubted distrust of the Unionist establishment and his rudimentary concern with social issues, could be expanded into a full blown radicalism. Equally, Boal also recognised that the only way to reproduce mass support from Protestant workers was to be utterly 'reliable' on the constitutional issue, and he had

been one of the most ruthless critics of O'Neill's liberalisation.

The initial aim in forming the DUP had been to create a united Unionist Party which would be as orthodox in its constitutional position as the Unionist Party of Craig and Brookeborough. It would be a stronger party because it would win popular support from all sections of Unionism by advocating equitable social and economic policies and by removing power from the undependable Unionist elites.³⁷

Smyth's account of the DUP's founding differs in emphasis. What it represented, according to him was;

..a synthesis between the radicalism of Desmond Boal and an Ulster variant of the politics of religious defence which the PUP had been busily promoting.³⁸

From any perspective, Boal's project was an odd one. Although there were historical precedents of a kind, none of them had envisaged a fully worked out alternative to traditional Unionism. The Northern Ireland Labour Party accepted the border and, in line with the traditions of Belfast working class organisation, saw itself as part of the British working class, the British trade union and labour movement. In a sense then, it was 'unionist' but, based in the trade union movement and self-consciously socialist, it could not properly be compared with Boal's project of a radical party based on Protestant exclusivism and the Protestant masses.

The DUP soon attracted the only Unionist MP with impeccable working class credentials, ex-prize fighter, ex-soldier, ex-docker, Johnnie McQuade. He held the Woodvale seat, bordering Boal's Shankill base and like him had resigned

from the Unionist Party in protest at the deteriorating security situation after the introduction of internment in August 1971. Despite this, no serious headway was ever made at turning the DUP into a left-of-centre political party with democratic structures which would re-unite all Unionists. Bruce argues that this was, "...largely because conservatives recaptured the Unionist Party",³⁹ thus presumably stemming the outward flow from the Unionist Party.

Moloney and Pollak stress the importance of personality, arguing that Paisley's schismatic history, and his pre-emptive announcement of the new party (in the ruins of Shankill Road pub blown up by the IRA with two dead and twenty injured), made it impossible for any major political figure among dissident Unionists to join. In addition, they point to Paisley's pragmatism, arguing in effect that the DUP was only a cover to make the evangelism of the Free Presbyterian Church acceptable on a broader base, and to Boal's arrogance and impatience with those who did not immediately grasp the importance of his political vision. Smyth points out that the socially discontented were only one section of Paisley's support, and they were confined to Belfast. Dissident Unionists in rural Ulster and politicised fundamentalists were probably more important, certainly as office-bearers, candidates and militants. The tensions between secular and religious aspects of loyalism (expressed for instance in controversy over whether "Protestant" could be dropped from the name of the new party) were sharp and intractable.⁴⁰

None of these authorities makes the obvious point that any project such as Boal envisaged for the DUP is so completely contradictory as to be doomed to failure. It is one thing to articulate class resentment against the elite which leads

an ethno/religious particularist coalition. It is quite another to move from this to a radical social programme. Such an enterprise could not help but shift from class rhetoric to class analysis and undermine the prevailing ethos of ethnic particularism. Boal himself seemed to recognise this because at the time he put forward the remarkably naive wish that the DUP would one day be able to attract Catholics as well as Protestants. In any case, the bedrock of the DUP was the Free Presbyterian Church whose biblical fundamentalism, could not easily be accommodated to materialist explanations of class inequality. In general it was unpromising material out of which to build a left-of-centre movement.

Boal left the DUP in 1974, and in the following year he was advocating a federal scheme for Ireland, having made the journey from 'hardliner' to 'moderate' which several other Unionists took. The Free Presbyterian element in the DUP continued to assert itself. In 1978, 9.5% of respondents in the Northern Ireland Attitude Survey who identified with the DUP were Free Presbyterians, compared with the 1.6% of all Protestants who belonged to that church.⁴¹ Methodists and Church of Ireland members were under represented in this sample, while Baptists were over represented, and Presbyterians (44.8 of DUP identifiers, 46.5 of all Protestants) came close to the proportion for the whole Protestant population. More telling is the proportion of activists and representatives:

In the 1973 power-sharing Assembly, and the 1975 Constitutional Convention all but one of the party's team was in the church. Of the 74 councillors elected in 1977, eighty-five per cent of those whose religions were ascertainable were, according to one reliable study, Free Presbyterians. In 1981 this rose to 89 per cent. In the 1982-86 Assembly, 18 of the 21 DUP Assembly members were Free

Presbyterians and four of them were ministers.⁴²

In terms of socio-economic composition, Moxon-Browne found that: "...there seems no doubt that Paisleyism, and more narrowly, support for the DUP is concentrated in the Protestant working class".⁴³ In support of this he cites responses to the Northern Ireland Attitude Survey (NIAS) which shows DUP identifiers seriously under-represented in status groups A (0.9%, as against the 6.4% of all Protestants in this category) and B (8.6%, against 11.4%) while DUP identifiers are over represented in groups C1, C2, D, and E. But support for Paisley and the DUP is far from being only an urban phenomenon. In the NIAS, Belfast city accounted for only 25% of the DUP identifiers, while 36.2% were classed as 'other urban', and 38.8% rural.

It is not surprising that there should be strong support for the DUP in rural areas, since the Free Presbyterian Church was in its early days a largely rural phenomenon. Paisley's own rural and small-town background should not be underestimated here in making him and shaping his appeal. It is no coincidence that his entire parliamentary career has been as representative for rural and small-town Co. Antrim. In any case, 'rural' and 'urban' are not as exclusive categories in Northern Ireland as they are in other places. As Hickey points out, more than two thirds of the population of Northern Ireland live within thirty miles of Belfast, a distance which reaches more than one third of the way across the province. Once outside Belfast, Hickey claims, we are quickly into a prevailing rural social influence, and a style of life very different from that associated with urban living. He stresses the pre-modern features of this; kinship ties and loyalty to traditions, the power of old beliefs, structures and attitudes, "...the sacred and the corporate rather than the secular and individualistic".⁴⁴

In such an atmosphere, the anti-modern, anti-rational, anti-materialist overtones of both religious and political Paisleyism can be expected to be popular. It might also be expected that both Free Presbyterianism and the DUP would do best in the border areas, where the proximity of the Irish Republic, heavy concentrations of Roman Catholics, and heightened IRA activity contribute to a particularly emphatic Protestant siege mentality, but this is not the case. Although Paisleyism has its adherents in all parts of the province, the heaviest concentrations are found in Antrim and Down, the north-eastern counties settled by Scottish Presbyterians, where Protestants are most clearly in the majority. Given the small size of the province however, and the sharpness of the all-pervading constitutional issue, it is probably wise not to be too literal about 'the border' since to a degree, all Protestants think of themselves as inhabiting disputed territory.

Although middle-class Protestants are under-represented, and working class Protestants are over-represented in the DUP, it would be wrong to think of it as a 'working-class party'. A working-class identity is handy enough for expressing resentment against liberal or moderate leaders, but useless, indeed highly counter-productive in terms of the party's, and its members' principal preoccupations, their identity vis-à-vis the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland's Catholics. It is simply not possible to construct an identity, a programme and an ideology with class as the central element without resorting to secular and materialist ways of thought, which would run counter to the fundamentalist world view which is such an important driving force in Paisley himself, the Free Presbyterian Church and the DUP.

Perhaps it is not surprising then, that the source of the DUP's main support, the Protestant working class, is not reflected in the party's structure. Flackes lists thirty-one members of the DUP who have been elected to devolved parliaments or the Westminster Parliament between 1971 and 1983. Of these, the occupations of only fourteen are listed. Four are ministers of religion, three are barristers and two professional politicians who became party functionaries on their graduation from university. One each of housewife, farmer, company director, travel agent and docker make up the balance. From this admittedly imperfect tally, it can be inferred if nothing else that there is no strong reflection of the social composition of the party's supporters in its elected representatives. Despite this, Paisley's closeness to the people by comparison with previous Unionist leaders is frequently cited as a major source of his attraction to Protestant voters.

He is not just one of the leaders of the Protestant lower classes, he is a product and manifestation of a large section of them. Unlike Edward Carson, James Craig or Basil Brooke, Paisley is of the people in whose name he speaks, which is one reason he will be there at the end, whenever that is. He is the lower-class Ulster Protestant ... Ian Paisley is the best introduction to what the consciousness of large sections of the Protestant poor is all about.⁴⁵

What is new and significant about him is that he comes from the environment of urban, working-class Protestantism, and to that extent is more representative of the majority than the landed gentry who spoke for it in the past. He is Ulster Protestant Man, in all his ugly reality.⁴⁶

There is some truth in the position outlined by these quotations, although it is probably significant that the

first author uses the terms 'lower class', and 'Protestant poor', instead of 'working class'. There is little in Paisley's background that would necessarily give him an instinct for or solidarity with specifically industrial working-class experiences or consciousness. It is likely that Paisley's sometimes uneasy relations with Protestant paramilitary and worker organisations (in both of which power has tended to lie with the Belfast working class), stem from this point. While indeed Paisley may be more representative of the urban working-class Protestant than "the landed gentry who spoke for it in the past", this point should not be overstated. Apart from his ambivalence towards radicalism, it is in the urban working class that religious observance is at its lowest, and where Paisley's specifically religious positions are greeted with the greatest scepticism.

Aside from occupational data, five university graduates were listed among the 31 DUP representatives, and of the 23 whose date of birth was listed, 15 had been born after 1940, which indicates that a high proportion of the DUP's parliamentary representatives were elected before they were forty. This supports Moxon-Browne's NIAS data, on the basis of which he makes the assertion that;

Although both parties draw from the same Protestant community, the DUP has a higher proportion of its support in the younger age groups while the Official Unionists have a higher proportion in the older age groups.⁴⁷

Since several of the fifteen were born between 1945 and 1950, it is likely that Paisleyism has a strong appeal to those who acquired political consciousness after the crisis of 1968/69 and in the context of the renewed IRA offensive.

The DUP is a contradictory party which is difficult to classify. It is a religious-based party which attracts much support from people who do not formally profess the strict minority sect which does much to give it its identity. It is a party which stands for extreme social conservatism, and has a strong anti-elitist character. It is a party of the urban working class, and also of rural, farming interests, some of them quite substantial. It is a party which appeals to young voters and career activists, although it has never held office, nor is it likely to. It is a party with a strong identity, yet the social composition of those who identify with it does not differ markedly from its principal rival, the OUP. Perhaps the conclusion towards which these contradictions point is that while the DUP arose out of the breakup of the old Unionist coalition, it is itself a coalition, a disparate group of the threatened and disaffected. Bruce, describing the three Westminster MPs elected in 1979 on the DUP ticket, points in this direction;

...Paisley, Robinson and McQuade between them represented the full spectrum of DUP support. Paisley was the evangelical preacher, embracing the religious and the political in his two careers and he was backed by the Protestant farmers. McQuade represented the old working-class independent unionist combination of militant loyalism and a populist critique of the ruling elite. Robinson was the first of a new generation of supporters of Paisleyism. As a teenager he had been attracted to Paisley because he shared his evangelical religion. He quickly became convinced of the need for political action and founded a branch of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers. Better educated, brighter, and more articulate than many of the older men who had supported Paisley since the 1950s, Robinson gave the party managerial and organisational skills it had previously lacked.⁴⁸

The Rev. Ian Paisley has been well-placed to reaffirm the Ulster and Protestant elements of Unionism and to make clear that Ulster Protestants are not British to the exclusion of these particularist identities. The status of being British must be made compatible with them, and is subordinate to them. In this way, Paisleyism has been an important political and religious force in Northern Ireland, galvanising, articulating, and organising the resistance of rank and file Protestants to liberalising and reformist tendencies in Unionism and the Protestant churches. With its reactionary, extreme sectarian and populist character, Paisleyism was the cutting edge of the revolt which broke up the old Unionist coalition. From this purely destructive role, it developed into a formal challenge to the Official Unionist Party as the leading voice in defending and promoting Protestant interests.

A number of factors have contributed to this success. Firstly, Ulster's religious culture has enabled Paisley to pursue politics-in-religion, and religion-in-politics. Religious belief and observance play a central role in the lives of the overwhelming majority of the people. Religion is an important component, for many, the important component in ethnic and national identity. There is a strongly fundamentalist strain in the Protestant churches in Northern Ireland, even in those mainstream churches whose theological leaders have embraced more liberal positions. Richard Rose found that 72% of Protestants said that miracles, "...happened just as it said in the Bible..."⁴⁹ In this context, Paisley has taken one of the elements of the Unionist identity -- Protestantism, more specifically, Bible Protestantism --- and brought it to the foreground as the principal identifying feature of his political movement. As Hickey has pointed out:

It is necessary to recall... that the Northern Ireland State is regarded by the majority as a Protestant State set up to preserve the integrity of Protestantism.⁵⁰

Paisley has used the characteristics of his religious thought -- especially fundamentalism, separatism, and the authenticity of personal experience -- to good political effect, and he has given theological sanction to a doctrine of resistance to established authority, based on the idea of a covenant between ruler and ruled.⁵¹ These characteristics have enabled him to embody inflexible, intransigent, traditional Unionism. The fact that he had fought for years against liberalism in the Church meant that he was well-placed to carry that fight into politics. In addition, he has been able to appeal to both rural and urban forces, and to keep in equilibrium the possibilities of constitutional and direct action.

He has come to embody loyalism in the sense of ethnic and religious self-determination, resistance to Irish nationalism and outside interference, and Protestant self-defence (in such groups as the UPV and the UCDC). He has added to traditional loyalism, the specific concerns of Free Presbyterianism, and the fundamentalist cause generally, and anti-establishment, anti-elitist populism. This mixture of loyalism, Free Presbyterianism, and populism, along with his own charismatic and authoritarian nature, make Paisleyism a formidable ideological package.

If Paisleyism typifies the strength and power of the forces released by the crisis of Unionism, it also suggests their incoherence and limitations. Paisleyism has no social programme, and no means of analysis to arrive at one. It has no political programme other than the restoration of devolved institutions for Northern Ireland on the basis of

majority rule, which means Protestant domination, and more vigorous security policies.

Partly because of the contradictions in his own beliefs, and positions, and partly because he is, as some authorities suggest, the prisoner of his followers as well as its leader, Paisley has been unwilling, and unable to take the movement which bears his name, and the party which is its principal political vehicle in any of the directions -- class, nationalism, or negotiated settlement -- which could give direction and dynamism to the forces released by the breakup of the Unionist coalition. Paisleyism remains a reactionary movement, defensive and not creative, with no broad goals to be realised. It is best described as a movement of reactionary populism.

Protestant Workers' Groups and the Breakup of the Unionist Coalition

One of the most important elements in the breakup of the Unionist coalition was action by worker-based organisations, the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW, 1969-73) and the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC, 1973-81). It should be made clear at the outset however that these were not sectarian trade unions. Their purposes were exclusively political, and they were without substantial industrial objectives and functions. Their origins were solely in the political crisis of Ulster Unionism and they had no institutional life prior to this. The organisational forms they took were sketchy and impermanent and included representatives of political and paramilitary groups. Workers' groups reached a peak of influence with the UWC strike of May 1974, and declined greatly after that.

The political organisation of Protestant workers owes much to the nature of the trade union movement in Northern Ireland.⁵² Protestants and Catholics do not belong to different trade unions, except insofar as they happen to be concentrated in different industries or categories of worker, but sectarian issues do arise in the question of trade union organisation. Although the majority of union members in Northern Ireland belong to unions based in Britain these unions are affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) based in Dublin. The ICTU has an autonomous controlling body, the Northern Committee to deal with politically sensitive cross-border matters.

Of the approximately 300,000 union members in Northern Ireland, about 90% are in unions affiliated with the Northern Committee of the ICTU and of these, around 78% are based in Britain. Some 14% are locally based unions and only 8% are based in Dublin⁵³

Although the general effect of this diffusion of responsibility has been to make unions and union federations reluctant to grasp the nettle of sectarian issues, the Northern Committee of the ICTU has been generally associated with Nationalist sympathies quite out of step with the loyalism of many Protestant members of its northern affiliates. In times of stability, this may not have mattered too much, because as Munck points out;

Protestant trade unionists ... act as workers anywhere do, if taken by themselves; they agitate for better wages and conditions, and sometimes elect communist (even Catholic) shop stewards if these are seen as the most militant representatives of their material interests⁵⁴

In times of instability however, workplace mobilisation becomes a vital expression of resistance by Protestant

workers when they find themselves at odds with Catholic militancy, 'their own' government and party, the British authorities, and the calls for peace, non-sectarianism and class politics from the 'official' trade union movement. Such was the background to the more or less spontaneous formation of the Loyalist Association of Workers during the confused period of civil rights agitation, O'Neill's reforms, and the Protestant backlash.⁵⁵ LAW developed out of an earlier, short-lived group called The Workers' Committee For the Defence of the Constitution. The prime mover in both was Billy Hull,⁵⁶ a convener of Amalgamated Engineering Workers' Union shop stewards at Harland and Wolff's shipyard. Hull had resigned from the Northern Ireland Labour Party over Harold Wilson's support for Irish unity. The core of LAW was in the shipyards but it drew support from other industries, especially among power station workers and in engineering and manufacturing concerns. Many shop stewards were among its leadership figures.

LAW campaigned vigorously for stronger security measures,⁵⁷ organising marches⁵⁸ and work stoppages.⁵⁹ Although LAW was a shop floor organisation, it scarcely concerned itself with industrial issues,⁶⁰ was open to "loyalists from all walks of life",⁶¹ and had strong links to political and paramilitary organisations.⁶² Insofar as it expressed itself on social issues, it did so exclusively in sectarian terms. For instance a complaint in a LAW publication at the low numbers of students from working class backgrounds at Belfast's university is accompanied by the allegation that working class Catholic students are favoured.⁶³ The impression that LAW was an incoherent movement of protest lacking clear political goals is confirmed by its all-pervasive distrust of established institutions, including not only governments, but churches,⁶⁴ trade unions,⁶⁵ and banks.⁶⁶

What the Loyalist Association of Workers conveyed above all was resentment and a sense of betrayal.

Clearly the working class loyalists have for too long been used by the Unionist Party as votes to be collected at election time. Witness the high proportion of middle to upper class MPs, a complete paradox to their numerical ratio in the class structure...Working class loyalists are like a rudderless ship, abandoned by the middle class and denied the right to elect spokesmen who will truly promote their interests.. Sooner or later the working class people will obtain their rights, the right to control their own destiny, to elect genuine MPs, to democratically govern the country for the benefit of the people and not the Unionist Party.⁶⁷

Despite the high profile its campaign of direct action achieved in the last year of the Stormont administration and the first of Direct Rule, LAW ceased to be the organisational vehicle for Protestant worker disaffection some time in 1973. Hull's erratic leadership⁶⁸ and the movement's ramshackle organisation led to problems of strategy⁶⁹ and tactics⁷⁰ which were reflected in severely strained relations with the Vanguard Movement.⁷¹ Moreover, Farrell claims that prior to its collapse, LAW was "in the midst of rows about the embezzlement of funds" and that it "..was riddled with racketeering and corruption".⁷² Given its ideological incoherence and ramshackle structure, it is not difficult to understand why LAW collapsed, but despite its inadequacies, it had demonstrated the potential of Protestant worker organisation. The informal worker militancy (especially in the shipyards) which Carson and the Unionist Party had exercised themselves so much to control between 1919 and 1922 was still an important part of the Protestant working class experience. Fifty years on however,

there was no determined leadership in the Unionist Party to channel and control it. LAW was the first indication that the Protestant workers were on their own:

As the political situation became more critical, the informal chain of communication and command within the sections in the yard and in other industrial plants became inadequate and it became necessary to formalise the structures of communication. Thus the Loyalist Association of Workers was born..."⁷³

As Fisk puts it, LAW filled a vacuum of authority and leadership:

Neither the private armies nor the politicians ..were.. able to unify the suspicions, the patriotism and the determination of loyalists who were helplessly watching the transfer of Stormont's power to London while Catholics began to gain the concessions they had so long demanded.⁷⁴

Despite LAW's ignominious end, it was clear that Protestant working class militancy was too durable to go without institutional expression. The body which replaced LAW, the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) drew on the same traditions of protest and the same peculiarities of divided trade unionism as its predecessor. It articulated the same sense of grievance and betrayal, but organisationally it was a much more formidable proposition.⁷⁵ In contrast to LAW, the UWC did not dissipate its energies in frequent protest action spurred by day-to-day political and security developments. Instead, a leadership core, based partly on LAW veterans and containing a strong representation of shop stewards with credibility in conventional trade union activity concentrated on preparing Protestant workers for industrial

action on a wide scale. Particular attention was given to recruiting the strategically crucial power workers who had the ability to shut down other industries by withdrawing their labour.

Another feature of the UWC was perhaps even more important. While LAW cooperated with the Ulster Defence Association and other paramilitary groups, the UWC brought the relationship between industrial and paramilitary groups much closer. This development clearly indicated that the initiative in resisting British-sponsored schemes of reform and organising protests against the IRA's campaign of guerrilla violence had passed from the politicians to grassroots organisations. Although like LAW, the UWC expressed antagonism to the old Unionist hierarchy in class terms, its distrust (and sometime open contempt) for politicians, went further than this. After all, neither Paisley nor even Craig -- the two main rivals for grassroots Protestant support at this time -- was representative of the old Unionist bourgeoisie or landed class. The principal source of suspicion was the political leaders' tendency to provoke violent direct action and then to distance themselves from the political fallout and moral revulsion which followed. As Protestants began to be jailed and interned for terrorist offences, this became a sharp division between the workers and paramilitaries on one hand, and the politicians on the other.

The UWC strike which destroyed the power-sharing executive, the centrepiece of British (and Irish) policies of reform, was in some respects the central event in the 25 years which have elapsed since the beginning of the civil rights campaign. It demonstrated the very narrow limits of Protestant toleration of reforms which directly affected the Northern Ireland Constitution and threatened change, no matter how long-term, in the form of state. The Sunningdale

Agreement threatened to do both these things by providing for a power-sharing executive which guaranteed Catholics the role in government which demography and the Westminster system denied them under Stormont. It also did so by providing for cross-border institutions, which pointed in the direction of a united Ireland. The strike and the executive's fate laid the foundations for a stalemate which has lasted since 1974, by demonstrating that the minimum demanded by constitutional Irish nationalists is greater than the maximum tolerated by the majority of Ulster Protestants.

Beyond these basic points, there is much that is open to interpretation in the UWC and the strike for which it takes credit. These issues are central to understanding the breakup of the Unionist coalition and can be summarised in two linked questions; how broadly-based was support for the UWC? and what social and ideological forces did it represent?

References to actual membership of the UWC are scant, and clearly neither the organisation nor its interpreters set much store by the issue. On the first day of the strike, The Guardian noted, "The UWC claim to have 58,000 members is widely held to be a gross exaggeration", stressing later that, "its considerable strength in the electricity industry was much more important".⁷⁶ The UWC's basis of representation was geographical, representatives from the six counties and the city of Belfast making seven units on the Council itself. These representatives were supposed to be "elected from factory delegates who are themselves elected by their fellow workers at branch level".⁷⁷

References to such elections being held are conspicuous by their absence in the primary and secondary sources on the UWC, and in general its democratic pretensions are not taken

seriously.⁷⁸ The representativeness of the UWC is also called into question by virtue of the concentration of its leadership in a limited number of trades in heavy industries and the fact that "...none of those who hold office represent any more than a small section of workers at any individual work place".⁷⁹

The issue of intimidation during the strike crystallised these questions as to the nature of the UWC's support. From the first day of the strike, intimidation -- mainly through the medium of barricades manned by paramilitary personnel -- played an important part in its success. Thirty-seven roadblocks were reported on 16 May (the second full day of the strike), and 172 on 20 May.⁸⁰ The role of intimidation was obvious and impressive. As one account puts it, describing the tiny turn-out to a trade union-sponsored march urging a return to work,

The intimidators have done their work too well, and only a brave few ran the gauntlet. Thousands more must have been deterred by the knowledge that even if they were at their workbenches, power was not available, nor was their gesture likely to force the strikers into submission.⁸¹

But a few days later, the same source expressed many observers' ambivalence about the strike;

It is true that a handful of self-appointed men have taken the community by the throat. It is true that thugs and bully-boys have been at work. It is true that there has been intimidation on a massive scale. It is true that the past few days have seen activities that can only be described as fascist in character. It is equally true that the objectives of the strike are supported by thousands of people who are neither thugs nor bullies, much less fascists.⁸²

Others were less equivocal; "The government's carefully nurtured belief that 'loyalists' are staying away from work only because of intimidation seems to be further from reality every day".⁸³

The main grounds for believing that support for the strike was not based solely on intimidation are provided by the results of the February 1974 Westminster general election. Called early because of the Conservative Government's conflict with the coal miners, the election could not have come at a worse time for the Sunningdale agreement and Northern Ireland's new constitution. Eleven of Northern Ireland's 12 Westminster seats were won by loyalists under the banner of the United Ulster Unionist Coalition (UUUC).⁸⁴ The fact that a majority of voters, and such an obviously large majority of Protestants, voted against the Sunningdale Agreement⁸⁵ gave force to the strikers' principal demand that there should be fresh elections for the Assembly. The Westminster elections underlined the fact that a majority for power-sharing in the Assembly itself could be manufactured only by aggregating the voters of reform Unionists and constitutional nationalists. Loyalists, as Hibernia perceptively observed, had now been "...overridden by the new Republican-Unionist elite".⁸⁶

The answer, then, to the question "how broad-based was support for the UWC strike?" is that although intimidation was required to enforce it, a majority of voters in the February election, and a very high proportion of Protestants, shared the strikers' concerns and probably their aims, if not the means they chose. The strike sent a clear message.

..the lesson which the UWC sought to convey was that their rejection of united Ireland

was not as has often been alleged, a demagogic invention of their political class, but rather something welling up from the base.⁸⁷

This conclusion prompts the question, exactly what was welling up from the base? What social forces were pushing forward and what ideological form did they take?

The most salient features of the UWC strike are how quickly and completely power passed from the hands of the conventional politicians to the workers' and paramilitary groups, but how short a time the initiative remained with them, and how little they were able to do with it. The rank and file distrust of politicians extended not only to the old Unionist establishment but also to the new generation of loyalist politicians. The strike was presented to Paisley and Craig as a fait accompli. Even before it began, "...political power passed effortlessly to the workers and the paramilitaries".⁸⁸ This power was emphatically and effectively deployed during the strike, but many factors limited its effectiveness as a sustained and durable political force.

The Sunningdale Agreement and the Executive presented Protestants with two crucial issues; power-sharing and shared institutions with the Irish Republic. Although there is some debate as to their relative importance in mobilising support for the strike,⁸⁹ together they constituted a serious threat to Protestant conceptions of self-determination. Once the Executive had been destroyed, divisions began to appear in loyalist ranks.

The strike with its overtones of a coup d'état, which were heady for some and sinister for others, appeared to have released forces which would keep the initiative. The

strike's co-ordinating committee self-consciously modelled itself on a provisional government,⁹⁰ and with its welfare and advice centres created something of the atmosphere of liberation politics not unlike that which prevailed behind the barricades of the Bogside and the Catholic areas of Belfast between 1969 and 1971. Political meetings were held to explain the meaning of the strike.

The politicians and the strikers had decided to educate the people politically in a way that the old middle class Unionist MPs at Stormont could never have dreamed.⁹¹

These features appeared to give a unity of purpose and a dynamism to the strike, effects which were heightened by the label, 'Ulster Workers' Council'. In fact the strike was run by a co-ordinating committee which included not only representatives of the UWC (three members) but also of all the loyalist parties and extra-parliamentary groupings. Despite the label by which posterity knows it, the strike unleashed forces by no means all of which were of proletarian and trade union provenance.⁹² As a result, the strike's legacy appeared to point in several directions for the future.⁹³ For some, the possibility of independence for Ulster was attractive.⁹⁴ For others, explicitly working class mobilisation was indicated.⁹⁵ Apart from these questions of ideology and identity, there were tactical differences between politicians and paramilitaries, and between hawks (who supported undiluted Protestant supremacy) and doves (who believed a gesture of conciliation towards the Catholic minority was necessary). To complicate matters, by no means all the hawks were to be found among the paramilitaries, and by no means all the doves were politicians. Within the paramilitary groups, feuding over territory, racketeering and warlordism overlay ideological differences between those who were 'pure' militarists and

others who wished to mobilise around radical politics as well.

Under these conditions, the energies which opposition to the Executive gathered up, and the strike unleashed, were quickly dissipated,⁹⁶ and the initiative passed again to the politicians.⁹⁷ Confirmation that significant though it was, the 1974 strike represented the dissolution rather than the metamorphosis of Unionism, is offered by the failure of a second loyalist strike in 1977.

The 1977 loyalist strike was called in the name of the Ulster Unionist Action Council (UUAC) at midnight on 2/3 May 1977 and was terminated on the night of 1 June. The strikers' demands were for an end to Direct Rule, a return to devolved institutions for Northern Ireland and for a powerful and effective offensive against the IRA. The strike reflected the fragmentation and demoralisation of Unionism, in contrast to the triumphalism of 1974. The UUAC was composed of two loyalist parties, the Rev. Ian Paisley's DUP and a smaller splinter group called the United Ulster Unionist Movement,⁹⁸ along with some of the fraternal organisations and the main paramilitary groups. By now the UWC was moribund,⁹⁹ and the proletarian flavour of the 1974 strike's organisation was largely absent. There was a notably rural and small town cast to the interests represented on the strike's organising committee in 1977.¹⁰⁰ Among its 12 members were an auctioneer, a pedigree livestock breeder and a farmer. Three businessmen all came from small towns, as did a retired regular soldier and a retired bank manager. The commander of the UDA was a member of the committee, as were the Rev. Ian Paisley and the full-time general secretary of the DUP. This left only one trade unionist as representative of the forces which did so much to give the 1974 strike its character.¹⁰¹

It was not only the balance of forces behind the strikes which differed between 1974 and 1977. In several respects the response of the British state differed in decisive ways. In 1977, the post of secretary of state for Northern Ireland was filled by Roy Mason¹⁰² who is generally regarded as having been a more robust and resilient figure than his predecessor in 1974, Merlyn Rees.¹⁰³ Mason's better relationship with the army and the army's more favourable assessment of the balance of forces complemented the greater professionalisation of the RUC¹⁰⁴ and the personal determination of its new (1976) Chief Constable, Sir Kenneth Newman.¹⁰⁵ The Northern Ireland Office under Mason also conducted a more aggressive information campaign which led to broadcasters and the newspapers pronouncing the strike abortive when the issue was still in the balance.¹⁰⁶

In addition to this firmer response from the British state however, the nature of the loyalists' demands allowed for some flexibility on the part of the government, by contrast with the apocalyptic atmosphere of 1974. It was not too difficult for Mason to publicise plans to strengthen the security forces in the war against the IRA, thus "...conceding without argument to (sic) the first UUAC demand".¹⁰⁷ Other factors told against the stoppage. The economic effects of the 1974 strike were keenly felt,¹⁰⁸ making for caution among any Protestant workers who were not wholeheartedly committed. The Belfast shipyard received its first substantial order (£70m) for several years just before the 1977 stoppage, prompting a mass meeting of 8,500 shipyard workers to vote overwhelmingly against striking.¹⁰⁹ Current unemployment figures were the worst since 1940.¹¹⁰ Trade unions had made a vigorous effort to assert themselves after the debacle (for them) of 1974¹¹¹ and were prominent in warning of potential job losses.¹¹²

Lastly, the loyalist groups had grown apart, rather than into a cohesive force since 1974. Personal rivalries, distrust between paramilitaries and politicians, the failure of distinctive working class initiatives to gain any purchase, and differing long-term objectives were more apparent in the absence of a symbol to unite against like the Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing Executive.¹¹³

Protestant Paramilitary Groups

Irregular military formations have been, and remain, essential to the politics of Protestant Ulster. At times these have fused with regular military or police formations, at others, they have co-existed with them in various degrees of discomfort. This has been a phenomenon of both rural and urban life; the defence of isolated farms and the boundaries of urban shatter zones where confessional areas abut on each other represent some of the essential characteristics of both Catholic and Protestant experience both before and after partition. In practice, the line separating the private violence of feud and self-defence from the legitimate functions of public order has never been well-established for Ulster Protestants. The idea that violence is the monopoly of the state and all other coercive measures are outlawed, has been hard to establish in Northern Ireland, as it was in Ireland as a whole until after 1922. Partition left the business of conquest, settlement anti-colonial struggle and competing versions of self-determination stabilised, but unresolved. Certainly, since the onset of crisis in the late 1960s, enough people on both sides of the religious divide have felt that initiatives outside the state law and order function are necessary for territorial defence and physical safety of their

communities, to make paramilitary organisation a major factor in the situation.

There are two essential features to this paramilitary tradition. Firstly, violence in Northern Ireland is best thought of in terms of a continuum spanning degrees of formality. At one end, there is more or less spontaneous rioting, often sparked by a provocative incident or even a rumour of provocation. In 'normal' times, this has a cyclical nature, following the calendar of sectarian rituals. Local champions, 'hard men', identified by individual prowess, occupational group or residential area, may play an important part, and rioting may be organised round them. In crisis situations, rioting may become more formal, involving strategies of revenge and deterrence, or protest at some provocative action of the state. Under such circumstances more formally organised bodies -- semi-secret societies on the model of agrarian revenge groups, or more open and broadly-based structures of area defence -- may take shape. The highest degree of paramilitary formality was achieved by the UVF between 1910 and 1914.¹¹⁴ It mirrored regular military formations in every way except one; it was a true citizen army, reproducing with a high degree of accuracy the structure of the whole Protestant community. It was commanded by retired British officers, landowners and businessmen, officered by tenant farmers and professional men, with artisans and labourers, both rural and urban falling more or less into line. Although outside the formal structures of public order, the UVF sought to parallel them closely. It was outside the law, and in terms of established authority, it was profoundly subversive. But it was not lawless, and indeed its leaders claimed, and its followers believed, that its function was to save the community from revolutionary anarchy.

Straddling the divide (often uneasily) between public and private violence, are citizen reserve units of regular police and military formations. These range from the militias of previous centuries to the 'B' Specials and Ulster Defence Regiment in this one. It is essential in trying to understand the Protestant paramilitary tradition (and the wider phenomenon of political violence in Northern Ireland) that these categories run into each other with distressing ease; individuals may belong to one or more category and act in different capacities at the same time.¹¹⁵

The second essential point is that the relationships between the state and various forms of irregular, self-help organisations have been problematic. These relationships may vary between direct co-optation, arms-length toleration, and outright repression. Co-optation has been generally accompanied by the twin goals of straightforward mobilisation of manpower for the defence of the state, and disciplining unruly elements which might be embarrassing or downright subversive. On the other side the unruly elements habitually see themselves as not only defence against the 'other' community and its armed defenders/aggressors, but a defence against appeasement or even betrayal by their own leaders.

One of the principal differences among Unionists, or to put it another way, between Unionists and loyalists is over the relationship between public and private violence, and the circumstances which justify self-help. The intensity with which this issue is taken up, has come to depend on perceptions of the balance of power between Unionists, nationalists, and the British government at any given time.

It was with this legacy of formal and informal military organisation that the Ulster Unionist community entered upon the stressful period which led to its fragmentation. It is scarcely surprising, then, not only that paramilitarism has played an important part in that process, but also that it has done so from a variety of sources and in a variety of forms.

Between 1968 and 1972, several developments combined to stimulate an upsurge of Protestant paramilitarism. The revival of Catholic militancy and all the ambiguity of its modernised and atavistic forms, threatened both familiar and novel forms of destabilisation to the Stormont system and the Protestants' place in it. Instead of viewing this as a security threat, O'Neill advocated reform and emphasised Northern Ireland's dependence on metropolitan goodwill. The cutting edge of resistance to the Civil Rights Movement and to reform was Paisley's combination of a demagogic rhetoric of resistance and intimidating street demonstrations. Despite Paisley's sotto voce qualifications and nuances of theology and political philosophy,¹¹⁶ his influence clearly encouraged the growth of paramilitarism. Communal tensions however were not confined to marches and counter-marches, and politicians' rhetoric of reform and resistance. They quickly came to pervade everyday life where Catholic and Protestant areas adjoined each other. Conforming to a long-established pattern, these street tensions fed into, and on, the larger political confrontations of the day.

When the dynamics of this situation precipitated the state's loss of control and British intervention in August 1969, the conclusive condition for the growth of Protestant paramilitarism was introduced; the removal of responsibility for internal security from local hands. The Battle of the Bogside and riots in Belfast had exposed the vulnerability

of the RUC to overstretch. Few outside Unionist circles believed that the police were impartial, and the 'B' Specials were completely discredited. As a result, the British Army took primary responsibility for security, the 'B' Specials were placed under the command of the GOC Northern Ireland, a senior British police officer was brought in to command the RUC, and a commission of enquiry into the police was set up. The Hunt Commission reported in October 1969. It recommended the disbandment of the 'B' Specials, to be replaced with the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), a locally recruited, part-time, regiment of the British Army, commanded by regular officers. It also redefined the role of the RUC, taking away its paramilitary functions, disarming and redeploying it to normal policing duties. The publication of the report's recommendations resulted in severe rioting in Protestant areas of Belfast, and the first killing of an RUC officer since the crisis began. These disturbances marked a significant escalation of Protestant disaffection.

The issue of control of security remained a bone of contention between the Unionist government and Westminster for a little over two years, until in March 1972 Stormont was prorogued and Direct Rule was imposed. This was the final blow to Protestant self-determination. The removal of control of security from Unionist hands appeared in Catholic (and metropolitan) eyes to mean removing from Protestant hands the instruments of repression which ultimately denied full rights to Catholics. In Protestant eyes, it meant removing the instruments of their defence from the only hands -- their own -- that could be trusted to use them with vigour against the violent threats to their independence which they permanently faced. The removal of security from local control was paralleled exactly by the recovery of the IRA from its abortive attempts at re-organisation in the mid

1960s, and the escalation of a determined campaign of bombing and shooting. The lesson seemed clear to many Protestants; now was the time take responsibility for counter-measures into their own hands.

Even before 1969, Protestant paramilitary groups were involved in political violence. One group took the name of the UVF, although in reality it was no more than a handful of Shankill Road 'hard men' organised into a gang of politically ignorant and operationally inept hoodlums. After committing a series of senseless and more-or-less spontaneous murders of innocent Catholics (and one Protestant) the gang was broken up and imprisoned. Despite this, it had created a legend which was to grow in the next few troubled years. Another was an underground sabotage group, closely associated with members of Paisley's direct-action organisations, the UPV and the UCDC. This covert unit was responsible for a series of explosions which damaged Belfast's electricity and water supplies in early 1969. Initially the outrages were attributed to the IRA and their effect on public confidence in the government was very influential in precipitating O'Neill's resignation. These groups were joined by a third source of influence -- the spontaneous street defence committees which were spawned by communal tensions in the summer of 1969 -- in the development of the main Protestant paramilitary groups from about late 1971 onwards.

The Ulster Defence Association (UDA)¹¹⁷

As communal strife simmered at the interface of Protestant and Catholic areas in Belfast through the summer of 1969, both sides began to organise themselves for local defence.

The classic community pattern emerges from the evidence: the two communities exhibiting

the same fears, the same sort of self-help, the same distrust of lawful authority. Catholics and Protestants were haunted by the same ghosts and retreated in fear to their respective ghettos while attributing to each other the responsibility and the blame. In the eyes of one the police were seen as the willing tools of Protestant dominance, in the eyes of the other, as a force whose leadership was 'soft on rebels'¹¹⁸

It was out of situations and groups such as these, especially after the riots, burnings and expulsions of August 1969, that the UDA grew. The rejuvenation of the IRA, the sharp increase in violence, especially after the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971, and ultimately the imposition of Direct Rule in 1972 were the main provocations to which the UDA was a response.

The UDA was, and remains, a hybrid organisation reflecting the confusions and contradictions of Protestant politics in the post-Unionist Party period. Its salient characteristics are as follows. It has a mass membership and following which has fluctuated greatly according to the degree of crisis perceived by Protestants in the balance of power between themselves, the British government, the Irish government and Northern Ireland's Catholic nationalists and republicans. At the same time it has underground terrorist units which carry out assassinations of Catholics¹¹⁹ and bombings both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.¹²⁰ The balance between 'political' mass action and terrorism is prone to shift, the former prominent in the first two years of the UDA's existence (1972-4). After 1974, the Northern Ireland conflict became stabilised and institutionalised and the relative unlikelihood of any dramatic change its parameters, attenuated the UDA's incentive and capacity to resort to mass action. The salience of sectarian assassination and other acts of terror in the UDA's operations also

fluctuates, principally in a symbiotic relationship of deterrence and revenge with IRA atrocities, which has been deeply institutionalised over the last twenty years.

The UDA has been prone to serious internecine feuding, arising from a number of sources.¹²¹ One has been rivalry between 'battalions' in the main working class areas of East and West Belfast. The UDA's origins as an umbrella group for the grassroots defence committees in these areas has aggravated this, as have personal rivalries between what effectively have been 'warlords'. Other sources of discord have been policy and ideological disputes, notably over the adoption of left and proletarian stances, or the possibility of fruitful contact with paramilitary groups on the Catholic side. A perennial problem has been the fusion between criminal racketeering and political paramilitarism. Despite frequent claims that the organisation has been 'cleaned up' or 'purged', this remains a serious issue.¹²² At times these various conflicts have erupted in rashes of internecine assassinations, and overall they have detracted greatly from the credibility of the UDA, even among loyalists. The banning of the UDA (1990), which remains in force, can be seen as a result not only of its terrorism, but also its criminality.

Feuds with other Protestant paramilitary groups have also marked the UDA's career, while relationships with Protestant politicians have always been fraught.¹²³ Like the worker organisations, LAW and the UWC, the UDA has resented Protestant politicians on class and populist grounds, perennially expressing bitterness at 'being used' as cannon fodder and abandoned (unlike their Republican counterparts) with condemnation when their violent acts are punished.¹²⁴ This disillusion with Protestant politicians is mainly responsible for the UDA's attempts to evolve a political

direction different from traditional Unionism. These attempts have taken two main forms. The first is the flirtation with working-class politics which has characterised virtually all significant groups in the breakup of the Unionist coalition and which foundered in the UDA's case (as it did with LAW, UWC, Vanguard and the DUP) on the contradictions between class and ethnic identities. More serious were the attempts of the UDA to promote the idea of an independent Ulster.¹²⁵

The UDA became seriously interested in independence for Ulster in the aftermath of the 1974 UWC strike, building and elaborating on a position temporarily held by Craig and the Vanguard movement. The disillusion with local politicians was surpassed by the loyalist paramilitaries' distrust of the British government in the aftermath of the Sunningdale Agreement. These factors, coupled with a certain post-strike euphoria at having taken the initiative with decisive direct action, the recognition that paramilitarism without political direction is a dead end, and the realisation that class politics could not be sustained in the context of ethnic identity, led in the direction of independence. Perhaps the most striking feature of the UDA's independence blueprints has been their acknowledgment that a condition of their success would be the active consent -- sealed in effective participation -- of the Catholic minority.

While the UDA plan did not provide for mandatory power-sharing in government, provisions in the constitution it proposed, including on stipulating that the election of the pivotal position of Speaker needed a two-thirds majority in the legislature, ensured that the system could not function without the co-operation of both sections of the community.¹²⁶

Another intriguing feature was the attempt to find alternative grounds for Ulster Protestant identity. Rather than religion, the 17th century Plantations and the link with Britain, the UDA's new justification for a separate identity from the rest of Ireland looked to the 'Cruthin', or ancient British people.

This is an attempt to locate the origins of Northern Protestants before the 17th century plantations of Ulster, and establish distinct roots for the Scot-Irish culture in ancient Ireland .. using evidence furnished by Ptolemy, Adamnan (a 7th Century abbot of Monasterian) and 'the genuine traditions' of the people that the Cruthin, a Pictish tribe with close connections in Scotland, pre-dated the Gaels and so qualify as the 'Ancient Kindred of Ireland.'¹²⁷

Despite these and other attempts at political creativity,¹²⁸ the UDA remains the principal vehicle of murderous deterrence and revenge on the Catholic community and the sounding board of grassroots Protestant frustration with the British government and Unionist politicians. It also remains subject to criminality and internecine feuding. In these ways the UDA continues to demonstrate the incoherence of post-Unionist Party Protestant politics.

The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)

Despite claiming the name and the heritage of Carson's army, the contemporary UVF has virtually nothing in common with the disciplined battalions drawn from the whole Protestant community which characterised its illustrious predecessor. The UVF has had a continuous but unsettled existence since its re-establishment in the mid-1960s. It has consciously avoided the mass membership of the UDA, and with the exception of one short period, the UDA's aspiration to

legitimate political operations. In fact, its organisational form has been largely incoherent, a matter of decentralised, largely autonomous murder gangs in both rural and urban areas, operating as an instrument of revenge for IRA murders of both security force members and civilians. Despite a penchant for emphasising military discipline and disdaining the more sordid aspects of the UDA, in fact, many of the most horrific sectarian murders have been carried out in the UVF's name by what were virtually freelance gangs of psychopaths. As with the UDA, criminality and internecine feuding reinforce this image of incoherence and anomie. This lack of direction and tight organisation has made the UVF particularly vulnerable to infiltration and detection by the security forces.

The exception to this characterisation (which is valid up to the present), is the period from the UWC strike in May 1974 to the second proscription of the UVF in November 1975. During these months, the UVF attempted to develop a political movement and a left-of-centre ideology to guide it. The high point of this trend was the October 1974 Westminster general election in which the UVF's political wing, the Volunteer Political Party (VPP) contested the West Belfast constituency. Nelson points to several factors prompting the UVF to broaden its strategy from 'pure militarism'. Awareness of the poor social conditions and other grievances of working-class Protestants, which played a part in all aspects of the dissolution of the Unionist coalition, was one. Another was the internment of Protestants, including UVF men, after 1972. To be treated as subversives by 'their own' government sharpened some volunteers' political awareness, and posed questions about their identity and loyalties. It also prompted at least limited exchange of views with republican paramilitaries inside Long Kesh internment camp, and even a degree of

cooperation with them. This development in particular encouraged a faction of the UVF to look for alternatives to violent sectarianism. Lastly, the British government lifted the proscription on the UVF in April 1974,¹²⁹ with the specific intention of encouraging it to embrace politics rather than violence.

Although these influences and incentives were not negligible, and some of them acted on endemic sub-themes of loyalist identity, there were formidable barriers and prohibitions in the directions which they encouraged. The attempt to transform the UVF was undertaken by a small class-conscious minority of the leadership. It was a top-down exercise in crash political education within a movement which had neither a mass base, nor any previous independent political position. Its challenge to more established forms of Unionist politics was met by counter-attacks from politicians, the pulpit and the Orange Order, and by scepticism from the media and Catholic politicians. These perennial obstacles to the creation of a loyalist working class party helped ensure that the VPP candidate lost his deposit and the 'politicians' within the UVF lost their influence. By November 1975, the UVF had once again begun to commit sectarian murders, and in that month it was banned again.

CONCLUSIONS

The dominant impression left by the breakup of the Ulster Unionist coalition is the contrast between the durability and resilience of the social and political forces which have made Unionism (and more particularly loyalism) such a genuinely popular position, and the fragility of the political movements and state structures which were unable to make something coherent and constructive out of such

strong impulses. In this respect, the institutions of traditional Unionism (principally the Ulster Unionist Party) and the mobilising agents of loyalist revolt which replaced them (the successor parties, the worker organisations, the paramilitaries) were all failures.

The Contradictions of Traditional Unionism

Two kinds of contradiction which permanently threatened to subvert traditional Unionism help to explain the fragility of its institutional expressions. The first was the contradiction between metropolitan Unionism which regarded notions of British identity and standards as substantive, and the unfocussed but powerful conceptions of Ulster Protestant identity which (especially in times of crisis) could verge on a kind of proto-nationalism and in which British identity was a much more ambiguous and instrumental notion. The contradictions between these positions could be held in check when Ulster Unionists were allowed a high degree of autonomy from British scrutiny and intervention. Under such circumstances, no clash of allegiance between metropolitan and loyalist conceptions of Unionism would be serious enough to break up the coalition.

Between 1910 and 1921, Unionists enjoyed the autonomy to organise, drill, acquire arms and otherwise prepare to set up their own state, because a considerable portion of the British establishment was sympathetic to them and the rest were mindful of the costs of coercing them. Between 1921 and 1968, autonomy was secured by the absence of popular discontent serious enough to embarrass British governments, or any other threat to the integrity of the Northern Ireland state beyond the capacity of Northern Ireland governments to cope. After 1968, neither of these conditions was valid, and the contradictions were exposed.

The second set of contradictions overlaps extensively with the first. Relevant here are the class resentments and sectarian practices which define the independent aspects of Protestant proletarian political culture, both rural and urban. Such demonstrations of independence have tended to occur at times when the whole Protestant community could feel relatively secure politically, while in times of threat and crisis, the classes have come together. This commonsense pattern of expressing and suppressing the discontents of an unreconstructed class order in an ethnically divided society depended on there being a ruling class which would not only lead the whole Protestant community in defiance of British authority, but would, by virtue of their own social and political status provide a link with sympathetic elements in the British establishment. Such leaders could expect to enjoy the impressive, but nonetheless conditional deference which characterised the complicated relationships between the Protestant classes.

If the Unionist establishment could, or would not fulfil these functions, there was nothing to prevent a much fuller expression of working class initiatives than ever before. From 1968, this began to happen, and it was in this way that the UWC and the paramilitaries found themselves, with a mixture of euphoria and dismay, face to face with the British establishment between 1972 and 1974.

These contradictions could have been resolved if the Unionist Party had turned itself into a party of permanent mobilisation, establishing itself as the vanguard of a more formally integrated movement, with much more extensive and ramified links to state structures and resources. In short, it could have been turned into a party of ethnic mobilisation. Two things stood in the way. Firstly, Northern

Ireland simply had neither the resources nor the autonomy to allow Unionism to acquire a social content and provide for the ethnic social mobility which alone would give meaning to such a party. For instance, such autonomy would be needed for the emphatic, open and more extensive discrimination against Catholics this would require. Secondly, the classes which dominated the Ulster Unionist coalition from the beginning were quite unlike the aspirant classes which inspired such ethnic mobilisation elsewhere. The kind of state-sponsored social engineering which is necessary to bind ethnic coalitions together was completely foreign to Unionism's landowning, commercial and industrial interests. The Protestant working class was not the only class-conscious component of the Unionist coalition.

With neither the autonomy, nor the resources, nor the inclination to transform itself, the Unionist Party was fated to remain not much more than an electoral convenience, the fragile and vulnerable centre of a coalition which was rife with contradictions. As a result, traditional Unionism could not maintain itself in power while reforming the system over which it presided into either a plausible simulacrum of British political culture and practice (as the British-sponsored reforms of 1968-72 were supposed to do), or an entirely new constitutional dispensation which frankly acknowledged that Northern Ireland is a divided society and made provision for the pathological features of such a society (as the power-sharing constitution of 1973-4 was supposed to do).

The Contradictions of the Loyalist Revolt

The loyalist revolt was an impressive demonstration at the ballot box, in the streets and at the work place that the primary identifications of Ulster Protestants could still be put to obstructive and destructive use. Equally impressive however, is the conclusion that these powerful impulses cannot resolve themselves into a coherent bloc, anchored by a constructive programme under an authoritative leadership. Loyalism is based on a powerful demotic political culture reflecting incoherent expressions of independence and deference. For loyalism to be satisfactorily contained within a wider Protestant bloc, deference has to be secured not only by the leaders' abilities to lead, but also by their respect for the essential elements of this culture, which include the myth of fraternity (embodied in the Orange Order), sectarian practices in employment and the distribution of public goods, emotive cultural displays of identity and dominance, and the repression of assertive displays of Catholic opposition.

O'Neillism, the Civil Rights Movement and British intervention undercut the basis of deference, but the loyalist revolt did not so much overthrow the existing Unionist power structure, as step into the vacuum as the centre collapsed.

The inability of the forces released by the loyalist revolt to fill this vacuum gives the breakup of the Unionist coalition the quality of a postscript (albeit a lengthy one) rather than a new departure. Effectively, there were three possibilities, none of which bore fruit. Firstly, there were several false dawns of class politics based respectively on the early days of the DUP, the UWC, and the paramilitaries.

But the divisions of ethnicity and nationalism were too deeply embedded for class politics in any inclusive sense, and the difficulties of the only other possibility -- ethnic mobilisation in the interests of class mobility -- have already been discussed.

Secondly, some form of independence such as those favoured by Craig and the UDA might have formed the nucleus of a new departure. But question marks over the viability of an independent Ulster in security and economic terms undermined the credibility of the idea. In any case, neither Craig's vanguard with its paramilitary associations, nor the paramilitaries themselves with their overtones of crime, warlordism and exemplary violence against Catholics could provide the kind of leadership with which the wider Protestant community could feel comfortable.

A third possibility would be for a hardline leader (or leadership group) with credentials won in resistance to the British and the Catholics to take a reconstituted Unionist coalition into a negotiated settlement. This has been a recurrent, but abortive feature of Unionist politics since direct rule in 1972. Many felt that Faulkner (the minister who had introduced internment in 1956 and again in 1971, O'Neill's opponent) was the man to sell a settlement to the Protestants, but his credential cut no ice with loyalists when he shared power with Catholics in 1974. William Craig's recommendation of voluntary coalition with Catholic parties signalled a precipitate decline in his influence, and the same fate nearly overtook Paisley when he indicated that changes to the constitution of the Irish Republic might enable Protestants to reconsider their opposition to a united Ireland.

The third possibility raises two important points about the loyalist revolt and the breakup of the Unionist coalition. The first is the extent to which loyalism is a phenomenon preoccupied with its own leaders and the British government, with almost no developed capacity to engage its Catholic antagonists except through the arms-length medium of violence and counter-violence. The second is the way in which loyalist political leaders have very little freedom of manoeuvre. Not only rank and file militancy, but also the power of worker and paramilitary leaders who may have scarcely any public profile, is capable of curbing or usurping the leadership prerogatives of elected representatives.

The contradictions of the loyalist revolt have ensured that Protestant interests and identities continue to be embodied and represented with different shades of meaning in the various political and paramilitary groups. Three things keep these contradictions in check. The first is that virtually all Protestants remain united on the essential Unionist premise, that a united Ireland is unacceptable. The second is that the IRA campaign of violence continues to legitimise the basic Unionist position, and to a large extent to insulate it from the critical scrutiny it would attract, especially in Britain, in the absence of the terrorist war of attrition. The third follows from the first two. As long as they hold, Britain appears willing to hold the ring and continue to guarantee the kind of social, economic and political stability in which the contradictions of the loyalist revolt are affordable.

1. This is the way it often appears to British politicians and commentators. See for instance, the words of a former British ambassador to Dublin; "The northern 'loyalists', who since the suspension of their government a year back had never swerved in their disloyalty to the will of their sovereign parliament ... in May 1974 called a general strike which effectively paralysed the Six Counties". Peck, J. Dublin From Downing Street Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1978) p.163. Perhaps the classic example (and certainly the most ill-judged politically) of this metropolitan exasperation was Harold Wilson's broadcast during the strike, in which he fulminated against the loyalists' disloyalty and called them 'spongers' on the British state. By the next morning, many Protestants had pinned pieces of sponge to their clothes as a badge of honour. For the text of Wilson's broadcast, see Fisk, R. The Point of No Return: the Strike Which Broke the British in Ulster London, Times Books/André Deutsch, pp.252-254.

2. For a discussion see Todd, J. "Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture" Irish Political Studies Vol. 2 (1987) pp.1-26.

3. See above, Chapter 6, note 33.

4. See McAllister, I. and Nelson, S. "Modern Developments in the Northern Ireland Party System" Parliamentary Affairs Vol. 32 (3) 1979, pp.279-313; McAllister, I. "Political Parties: Traditional and Modern" in Darby, J. Northern Ireland: the Background to the Conflict Belfast, Appletree Press (1983) pp.61-78; O'Leary, B. "Party Support in Northern Ireland, 1969-89" in McGarry, J and O'Leary, B. The Future of Northern Ireland Oxford, Clarendon Press (1990) pp.342-357. Hibernia provides a very useful contemporary commentary on the break up of the Unionist coalition. See especially "The Unionist line-up" (16.3.73); "The final split in Unionism" (1.3.74); "The changing forces of Unionism" (15.3.74); "The loyalist tightrope" (19.7.74); "Never more united" (21.2.75); "Politicians or paramilitaries?" (3.10.75).

5. This total also includes by-elections. For detailed summaries of the various electoral systems, and for election results (up to 1983), see Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1989) pp.303-376.

6. For the text, see Wallace, M. British Government in Northern Ireland Newton Abbot, David and Charles (1982) p.37.

7. Wallace, British Government in Northern Ireland p.37.

8. Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland NI Cmd 535 (1969). See Brewer, J. et al, Police, Public Order and the State London, Macmillan (1988) pp.50-52; Ryder, C. The RUC London, Mandarin (1990) pp.114-117.

9. Paisley won the Stormont constituency of Bannside (vacated by Capt. O'Neill) in April 1970. In 1969 he ran a

close second there to O'Neill. On the same day another minister of his Free Presbyterian Church took the South Antrim seat. Both contests were by-elections. Paisley also won the Westminster constituency of North Antrim, of which Bannside is part, in the June 1970 general election. For results, see Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory p.311.

10. For a narrative account of these months and an interpretation of Chichester-Clark's resignation see Sunday Times Insight Team Ulster Harmondsworth, Penguin (1972) pp.236-251. The precise issue which precipitated his departure was the refusal of the British government to grant him the troop increases he requested. He stated that he saw, "no other way of bringing home to all concerned the realities of the present constitutional, political and security situation". See Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. 1, Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1973) p.98A.

11. Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory p.404.

12. British soldiers of the Parachute Regiment fired on marchers at an anti-internment rally, killing 13 of them.

13. That is, those elected as Official Unionist candidates, but who opposed power-sharing.

14. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. II p.320B.

15. It was to include six Unionist and four SDLP members, with one post for the Alliance Party.

16. Belfast Newsletter 21.11.73.

17. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. II p.360B.

18. For a summary of the text, see Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. II Appendix 7, pp.376-379. Wallace, British Government in Northern Ireland (pp.87-107) quotes heavily from the texts of the Green Paper (The Future of Northern Ireland October 1972), White Paper (Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals UK Cmnd 5259 1973), Constitutional Act (The Northern Ireland Constitution UK Cmnd 5675, 1974) and Sunningdale Agreement, which marked the various stages of the attempt at a power-sharing solution. For an analysis of the political forces at work in the path to an agreement see Kyle, K. "Sunningdale and After: Britain, Ireland and Ulster" The World Today November 1975, pp.439-450. See also Bew, P. and Patterson, H. The British State and the Ulster Crisis London, Verso Books (1985) pp.39-74, especially their analysis of "the Irish Dimension" at pp.52-60.

19. "...the minimum condition for safeguarding the loyalist cause is plain. The power to damage it must be removed from Westminster's hands. This entails that Ulster must have control over her own internal security and be able to deploy whatever forces she consider necessary to meet any challenge

coming from any source in Ireland". Ulster -- A Nation Belfast, Ulster Vanguard, no date (copy in Political Collection, Linen Hall Library) pp.12-13.

20. See "The loyalist tightrope" Hibernia 19.7.74. See also Nelson, S. Ulster's Uncertain Defenders Belfast, Appletree Press. (1984).

21. "Vanguard's objective is to re-negotiate Ulster's relationship with Westminster, Vanguard has no wish to take Ulster out of the United Kingdom and it is within the United Kingdom that Vanguard will strive for an accommodation that is consistent with the safety and the dignity of an old and historic community.." Ulster -- A Nation p.13. But another earlier document which pre-dates direct rule states, that if the powers of the Northern Ireland Parliament are abrogated without its own consent "...we shall assert our right to take whatsoever action we consider best to safeguard our loyalist cause.... such action to include if there is no alternative, the establishment of an independent British Ulster". The ambiguity of "independent British Ulster" is obvious, as is the mimicry of the 1912 covenant. See Ulster Vanguard Action Rallies: Declaration of Intent and Covenant to Act. No date (copy in Political Collection, Linen Hall Library).

22. McAllister and Nelson, "Modern Developments in the Northern Ireland Party System" p.289. Most other authorities give the party the title of 'Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party'.

23. On Paisley and Paisleyism see; Bruce, S. God Save Ulster: the Religion and Politics of Paisleyism Oxford, Clarendon Press (1986); Moloney, E. and Pollak, A. Paisley Swords (Co. Dublin) Poolbeg Press (1986); Smyth, C. Ian Paisley: Voice of Protestant Ulster Glasgow, Scottish Academic Press (1987); Marrinan, P. Paisley: Man of Wrath Tralee, Anvil Books (1973); MacIver, M.A. "Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition" Political Studies Vol. 35 (1987) pp.359-78; Gallagher, T. "Religion, Reaction and Revolt in Northern Ireland: the Impact of Paisleyism in Ulster" Journal of Church and State Vol. 23, Autumn 1981, pp.423-44. See also, Moloney, E. "Paisley" Crane Bag Vol. 4 (2) 1980, pp.660-664; Nelson, Ulster's Uncertain Defenders; Bell, G. The Protestants of Ulster London, Pluto (1976); McAllister and Nelson, Modern Developments in the Northern Ireland Party System pp.291-293.

24. Bruce, For God and Ulster pp.199-202 disputes the conventional description of Paisley as a 'charismatic' leader, in terms of an elaboration of Weber's leadership typology. While Paisley's role is unsanctified by tradition, his platform is not innovative and depends on adherence to received tenets of political and religious fundamentalism. But by the logic of Bruce's own argument, Paisley is a hybrid of traditional and charismatic, rather than a purely traditional one, as he seems to argue. Bruce also downgrades the 'looser' usage of charisma ("...good orator... considerable personal charm..") to mere secondary status. Given the extraordinary personal powers of fortitude,

vigour, and moral certainty attributed to Paisley by his followers and even his enemies, this probably reflects undue theoretical austerity on Bruce's part. Probably most people when invited to contemplate the likely trajectories of the Democratic Unionist Party and the Free Presbyterian Church if Paisley had been removed from the scene in the early 1970s would hesitate before denying that he is a charismatic leader.

25. On Paisley's "penchant for qualifications from mail order colleges" and "degree mills" see Bruce, For God and Ulster p.168 n9. In 1966 Paisley was awarded an honorary doctorate by the "educationally legitimate", but ultra-fundamentalist Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. See also Moloney and Pollak, Paisley p.224 and pp.243-7.

26. For the importance of prophecy in Paisley's world view see MacIver, Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition p.360 and p.366: "The land desperately needs a prophet to discern the times and Paisley rises to meet the need he sees by drawing parallels between historical events and the present".

27. Several of the first congregations in Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church resulted from revolts by Irish Presbyterian Church congregations against their ministers. Paisley was adept at exploiting such divisions. The hierarchy of the more established church, moreover, was outraged that Paisley should claim the title 'Presbyterian' when (they claimed) he was neither trained nor ordained as a Presbyterian. See Bruce, For God and Ulster p.42. For Paisley's early skirmishes with the Orange Order (which he left in 1962), see Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.33-4 and pp.51-55. From as early as 1958, Paisley was agitating against 'appeasers' in the Unionist Party, and backing extremist candidates who opposed them. See Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.85-6

28. Rose, R. Northern Ireland: a Time of Choice London, Faber and Faber (1976) pp.316-7.

29. When Paisley and his followers targeted Irish Presbyterian Church congregations where ministers were at odds with fundamentalist elements in their flocks, they would put pressure on the incumbent with noisy demonstrations and alternative open-air services within sight and sound of regular churchgoers.

30. Disturbances in Northern Ireland, the Cameron Commission, Northern Ireland Cmd 534 (1969) Para. 224 p.89.

31. Cameron Commission, Para. 226, pp.89-90.

32. Since the early 1970s when Unionism splintered into several parties, groupings and tendencies, the Unionist Party has been popularly referred to as the 'Official Unionist Party' (OUP), a usage copied in this present work. O'Leary's usage, 'Ulster Unionist Party' (UUP) refers to the same party. See the entry for 'Ulster Unionist Party' in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory

1968-88.

33. O'Leary, B. "Party Support in Northern Ireland 1969-1989" in O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland Appendix 4, pp.342-357.

34. Of the six candidates in 1969, three were ministers of the church, and another was a church activist.

35. See for instance "The Enigmatic Des Boal" Hibernia 24.9.71, p.5. See also the entry for Boal in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory; Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.265-70 and Bruce, God Save Ulster pp.115-122.

36. Boal won a scholarship to the prestigious Portora Royal School in Eniskillen, whose products include Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett. He went from there to study law at Trinity College Dublin, a pillar of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy.

37. Bruce, For God and Ulster p.120. See also Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.265-269.

38. Smyth, Ian Paisley: the Voice of Protestant Ulster p.30.

39. Bruce, For God and Ulster p.120.

40. Smyth, Ian Paisley: the Voice of Protestant Ulster pp.27-37.

41. Moxon-Browne, E. Nation, Class and Creed in Northern Ireland Aldershot, Gower (1983) p.96.

42. Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.270-271.

43. Moxon-Browne, Nation Class and Creed in Northern Ireland pp.95-6. pp.95-6.

44. Hickey, J. Religion and the Northern Ireland Problem Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1984) p.99.

45. Bell, The Protestants of Ulster pp.46-7.

46. "The Billy Boy Who Came In From the Cold" New Statesman 24 April 1970, pp.569-70.

47. Moxon-Browne, Nation, Class and Creed in Northern Ireland p.97.

48. Bruce, For God and Ulster p.116.

49. Rose, Governing Without Consensus p.261. Rose also found that there was no significant difference between Catholics and Protestants on this issue. See also McAllister, I. "The Devil, Miracles and the Afterlife: the Political Sociology of Religion in Northern Ireland" British Journal of Sociology Vol. 33 (1982) pp.330-47.

50. Hickey, Religion and the Northern Ireland Problem p.124.

51. On the theological dimension of Paisley's political thought, see MacIver, Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition.

52. For a general account see Boyd, A. The Rise of Irish Trade Unions Tralee, Anvil Books (1972). See also McCarthy, C. "Civil Strife and the Growth of Trade Union Unity: the

Case of Ireland" Government and Opposition Vol. 8 (4) 1973, pp.407-431, especially pp.418-422. For an account by a prominent Belfast communist, which is notable for its avoidance of the issue of Protestant workers' political loyalties, see Sinclair, B. "Trade Unions in Ireland" Marxism Today June 1973, pp.181-183. For a sympathetic account of the trade union movement in Northern Ireland and its work for peace, written during the UWC strike, see Taylor, R. "Shopfloor Ulster" New Society 23.5.74 pp.433-4. For an analyses of the implications of the strike for the trade union movement, see Harbinson, J. "The Unions' Northern Dilemma" Hibernia 5.7.74 p.3. and "Northern ICTU Under Attack" Hibernia 3.9.74 p.8. On the incongruity of trade union leaders campaigning alongside extremist Protestant politicians against defence cuts and job losses, see Boyd, A. "Northern Unions in Tow to the Politicians" Hibernia 7.5.76.

53. Workers' Research Unit, Trade Unions in Northern Ireland Belfast, Belfast Bulletin No.7 (1979). Quoted in Munck, R. Nation, State and Class Struggle Boulder, Westview (1985) p.91.

54. Munck, Nation, State and Class Struggle p.91.

55. See Fisk, The Point of No Return pp.24-6. Farrell, M. The Orange State London Pluto Press (1976) p.317. See also the entry for LAW in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory.

56. For a sharply critical profile of Hull and LAW see McKeown, M. "Billy Hull: Marching to Nowhere?" Hibernia 6.10.72.

57. This and other concerns of LAW can be gauged from the pages of its own publication LAW which appeared (often undated) throughout the movement's existence, most regularly and fully in 1972. The Political Collection of the Linen Hall Library in Belfast has substantial holdings.

58. See for example a march by 4 000 shipyard workers and shop stewards to Unionist Party headquarters to demand internment without trial (12.3.71) Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol. 1 p.197. For a summary of others, see McKeown, "Billy Hull: Marching to Nowhere".

59. See for example a four hour work stoppage (8.3.72), protesting against the deteriorating security situation. The participation of power workers caused widespread electricity cuts. Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland: a Chronology of Events Vol.2 p.151. Other strikes and stoppages were provoked by sniper attacks on Protestant workers at factories in Catholic areas, and a day of mourning (26.7.72) for the victims of the IRA's worst bombing atrocity (up to that point).

60. A rare reference to one in LAW concerned the threatened closure of Short Brothers and Harland's missile production capacity at Castlereagh in Belfast. "Hands off Blowpipe" LAW Vol. 2 (39) no date.

61. A measure of the organisation's confused identity can be gathered from an article in LAW (Vol. 1 No.7) describing a television appearance by one of its leaders; "He drove home our aims and points very clearly as a socialist, that LAW was an association of united loyalists from all walks of life and nothing to do with the trade union movement". In "Get Your Facts Right" (Vol. 2. No.38), the writer reports "lawyers, schoolmasters and professors" as members of LAW.

62. The figure who best exemplifies the overlap between the industrial, paramilitary and political wings of loyalism, is Glen Barr. This fitter and shop steward chaired the Derry branch of LAW, commanded the local UDA battalion, and was a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly (1973-4) for Ulster Vanguard. Barr also usefully exemplifies the continuity between LAW and its successor, the Ulster Workers' Council. For a profile which is also a useful summary of loyalist organisation at the time, see Greene, B. "Glen Barr: out on his own" Hibernia 22.11.74.

63. "Social Aims of LAW" LAW Vol. 1 (26).

64. Church leaders who met British prime minister Edward Heath on a visit to Northern Ireland are described as men who "...are so far removed from the actual situation that any judgments they make are based on second hand information and distorted because they always attempt to steer a middle course so as not to offend anyone". LAW Vol. 1 (32).

65. A constant preoccupation was to encourage the election of loyalist shop stewards in order to take over trade unions. Congratulations to one such successful candidate appear in LAW Vol. 1 (26).

66. Distrust of the 'money power', especially of English banks, is frequently expressed. See LAW Vol. 1 (28 and 19).

67. LAW Vol. 2 (43)

68. See McKeown, "Billy Hull: Marching to Nowhere".

69. See for instance the plan to transform LAW into a full blown workers' party to contest elections and participate in the constitutional conference proposed by the British government; Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland, A Chronology of Events Vol. II, 1.8.72. The decision was overturned three weeks later. Deutsch and Magowan, 5.9.72.

70. The intimidation and violence which attended the LAW-sponsored work stoppage on 7.2.73, especially the murder by a sniper of a fireman who was trying to extinguish a fire in a Protestant area of Belfast, brought much public criticism of LAW and other loyalist groups. Altogether, five people were killed and, "During the 24 hours up to the morning of February 8, seven people were injured by gunshot and twenty other people were injured. There were 35 malicious fires, eight explosions, and 68 people were arrested". Deutsch and Magowan, Northern Ireland, a Chronology of Events Vol. II, 7.2.73.

71. Vanguard reacted angrily to the violence of the February 1973 strike, while LAW members felt that Vanguard was prone

to incite extra-legal action and then denounce it. More generally, Vanguard was very uncomfortable with any suggestion of working-class self-assertiveness from LAW. On these class-based tensions, see Nelson, Ulster's Uncertain Defenders pp.128-134.

72. Farrell, The Orange State p.317. Farrell presents no evidence for these claims, but Nelson's account, based on interviews and first-hand observation, states that, "...Money collected from members was sent to a central fund which kept inadequate records and from which cash was siphoned off by individuals". Ulster's Uncertain Defenders p.133. The Irish Times (17.5.74) also cites embezzlement, along with lack of confidence in Hull's leadership, undue paramilitary influence, too frequent stoppages and the murder of the fireman in Sandy Row, as factors in LAW's decline.

73. McKeown, "Billy Hull: Marching to Nowhere?".

74. Fisk, The Point of No Return p.24.

75. The fullest account of the UWC is in Fisk, The Point of No Return. See also Kelleher, T. "Who's Who in the UWC" Hibernia 7.6.74. This valuable source provides a critical appraisal of the organisation and brief biographical data on 19 of its leading members. See also Probert, Beyond Orange and Green.

76. The Guardian 15.5.74.

77. "Work Together, Win Together" Ulster Workers' Council News Sheet (no date). Political Collection, Linen hall Library.

78. See for example Kelleher, "Who's Who in the UWC": "Not only was the UWC centralised in origin, it was and is hierarchical in structure, undemocratic in organisation and dictatorial in method".

79. Kelleher, "Who's Who in the UWC".

80. For a timetable of the strike, see Fisk, The Point of No Return pp.249-51.

81. Belfast Telegraph 21.5.74. The Telegraph is a Belfast daily paper of reforming Unionist outlook.

82. Belfast Telegraph 27.5.74.

83. Robert Fisk in The Times 22.5.74.

84. This was a tactical understanding between the Official Unionist Party, Vanguard and the DUP to cooperate in opposing power-sharing. The UUUC parties divided the seats between them, while the pro-power-sharing parties not only had to defend a system which was only a month old, but had to run against each other. In a 70.4% poll, the UUUC parties took 51.1%. The 'reform' or pro-Sunningdale Unionist parties took just 13.1% of the votes. For full results see Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory 1968-88 pp.319-322.

85. In fact, it is not as simple as this. Since the Agreement included two elements -- power-sharing and the

Council of Ireland (or "Irish Dimension") -- it is open to interpretation which, or both incurred Protestant disapproval.

86. "The Loyalist Fightback" Hibernia 4.1.74.

87. Keith Kyle in The Times 10.7.87, p.18. Others of course continued to resist the lesson. The Irish Times reflected the impotent fury of constitutional nationalists, north and south (and that of the Republic's government), at Britain's apparent capitulation to the strikers. It apparently still believed that Protestants, "...who have been led up blind alleys in the past by unscrupulous leaders" (31.5.74), continued to be manipulated, though now by "...corner boys...bigots...genuine proletarians" (24.5.74). Also to blame were, "...out of date leaders who want total victory like William Craig, and clerical toughs like Ian Paisley" (24.5.74) as well as the failure of the Protestant clergy (28.5.74) and "...the great mass of moderate Protestant Unionists of which so much has been heard" (29.5.74) who did nothing to break the strike. When even this comprehensive cast of villains appeared inadequate, "hysteria" and "political insanity" were deemed to be "ascendant among the Protestant section of the people in the North" (3.6.74).

88. Fisk, The Point of No Return p.49. On the political manoeuvrings in the month prior to the strike, see pp.40-50. See also "Facing the Loyalists" Hibernia 24.5.74. In this account, "...the UWC made it abundantly clear that they were running the show independently of the politicians, and when the Loyalist leaders were brought in, they were told what to do and say".

89. See for instance Lee, J. Ireland 1912-85: Politics and Society Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1989) pp.447-8.

90. This atmosphere is admirably (if over-enthusiastically) conveyed by Neal Ascherson's report, "The Republic of Hawthornden Road" in The Observer (2.6.74). Ascherson invokes Poland (1970), Algeria (1958) and the French Revolution, claiming "...the whole centre of gravity of Protestant politics has shifted". Even he acknowledges in conclusion, however, the problems of retaining the initiative, "...after the doomsday effect of the strike dissipates..".

91. Fisk, The Point of No Return p.122.

92. For instance, some of the paramilitary groups (especially the Ulster Special Constabulary Association and Down Orange Welfare) had a pronounced rural character.

93. On the confusions and contradictions of loyalist politics after the strike, see Nelson, Ulster's Uncertain Defenders pp.155-160. The following summary draws heavily on this account.

94. See Ascherson, "The Republic of Hawthornden Road" for the contemporary flavour of this mood. For a more cautious assessment see Derek Brown's report on the strike's aftermath, "Will Ulster Show the Red Hand?" The Guardian

(30.5.7).

95. For a profile of the most enthusiastic proponent of this view See Greene, "Glen Barr: Out On His Own".

96. See "Loyalist Workers on the Sidelines" Hibernia (27.9.74). For a view which argues for the continuing vitality of these forces, see Greene, B. "Another Loyalist Strike?" Hibernia (30.5.75). Even this case is hedged around with qualifications, and views the UWC as a paramilitary front, rather than a genuine worker organisation.

97. See Nelson, Ulster's Uncertain Defenders pp.161-9.

98. See the entry in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory.

99. There were even moves to resurrect LAW. See Trench, B. "The Loyalists' Confusion" Hibernia (29.4.77).

100. See "Here Are the Men Behind the Strike" Belfast Newsletter (29.4.77). Membership of the disbanded Ulster Special Constabulary, holding church offices, and membership of the senior fraternal organisations, the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the Royal Black Preceptory are common to several of the leaders.

101. Trench, "The Loyalists' Confusion" notes the importance of rural paramilitary groups, as well as the predominantly Belfast-based UDA in the organisation of the strike, pointing to "...the emergence of the Ulster Service Corps, overlapping with the Ulster Special Constabulary Association. The prosecution of USC 'vigilante' groups at Portadown has, more than the third anniversary of May 1974 precipitated the UUAC threat. The USC has become the strongest of the Loyalist paramilitary groups in Fermanagh, Tyrone and Derry and has also been active with its patrols in Co. Armagh".

102. Mason was a former miner and trade unionist who, among several other ministerial posts, had been secretary of state for Defence between 1974 and 1976. See entry in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory.

103. See for instance Lee's assessments in Ireland p.445 and pp.51-2. On Rees's vacillation during the 1974 strike see Fisk, The Point of No Return.

104. On the professionalisation of the RUC see Brewer et al, Police, Public Order and the State. For the RUC in 1974 see Fisk, The Point of No Return. For the RUC's greater professionalisation in 1977 see also "Whose Bluff is Called?" Hibernia 13.5.77 and Ryder, A Force Under Fire pp.162-167.

105. On Newman's handling of the strike see Barzilay, D. The British Army in Northern Ireland (Vol.2) London, Centurion (1978) pp.217-8.

106. On the NIO's handling of the media see, "Whose Bluff is Called?" Hibernia (13.5.77). On Chief Constable Newman's use of televised barricade-clearing operations to boost the morale of the RUC, see Ryder, The RUC pp.164-5. On the UWC's

seizure of the media initiative in 1974 see Fisk, The Point of No Return. On their hesitancy in 1977, see "Whose Bluff is Called?" which observes that the UDA recognised "...that they had to avoid confrontations -- at least televised confrontations -- with the security forces".

107. Mason made these assurances to a group of Protestant workers from a key power station, whose withdrawal of labour ensured the success of the 1974 strike. He then informed the media that he had reassured the workers. Belfast Newsletter 6.5.74. See also Ryder, The RUC pp.164-5.

108. For a detailed account see Fryer, J. "The Boom the Bully Boys Wrecked" Sunday Times 9.6.74.

109. The order needed a £12m government subsidy to clinch it. See Belfast Newsletter 30.4.77.

110. 56 615 were jobless out of a working population of about 500,000. Belfast Newsletter 27.4.77.

111. Ryder, Force Under Fire p.161 and p.163.

112. For example, trade union leaders warned that 1 330 jobs in the GEC factory at Larne were in jeopardy and that Belfast would lose its raw material trade to other ports. See Belfast Newsletter 13.5.77. But for a more critical appraisal see Miller, M. "Timid Trade Union Response" Hibernia 13.5.77.

113. For a summary of these contradictions, see Trench, B. "The Loyalists' Confusion"; Holland, J. "UDA: No Pulling Power" Hibernia 13.5.77; Trench, B. "Bloody Nose For the Doctor" Hibernia 13.5.77.

114. On the UVF see Stewart, A.T.Q. The Ulster Crisis London, Faber and Faber (1967), especially pp.69-78. A fascinating insight into the organisation of the UVF is provided by Cruickshank, P. The Tyrone Regiment: Record of Camp Instruction Baronscourt 1913 (no publisher or date, copy in the Political Collection of the Linen Hall Library, Belfast). Of the 257 men who attended the camp on the estate of its (elected) commanding officer, the Duke of Abercorn, nearly half (119) were farmers. The next largest category was labourer (28) and there were eight "landed proprietors". The balance was widely spread between professional and businessmen ("There was a camp post office and also a telegraph office so that businessmen in camp could keep in constant touch with their business by telephone or telegraph.") and rural tradesmen. The descriptions of camp organisation and activities give a clear picture of a civilian community reproduced in uniform.

115. An example of this is the number of part-time security force members who are convicted of serious crimes of violence, a point which will be enlarged upon in a later chapter.

116. See his concern, for instance, that actions by his followers, no matter how provocative or potentially destabilising, should be lawful. On Paisley's theory of resistance, see MacIver, Ian Paisley and the Reformed

Tradition pp.375-78

117. The entry in Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory provides an excellent summary of information on the UDA. See also Bruce, S. The Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland Oxford, Oxford University Press (1992); O'Malley, The Uncivil Wars ch.8; Holland, J. Too Long a Sacrifice New York, Dodd and Mead (1981); Nelson, Ulster's Uncertain Defenders. A useful account of the UDA shortly after its founding is, "Who's who in the UDA" Hibernia 14.7.72. For a portrait of the organisation and its leading spokesman in the mid-1970s, see "Andy Tyrie: a profile" Fortnight 19.3.76.

118. Violence and Civil Disturbances in Northern Ireland in 1969, Northern Ireland Cmd 566 (1972), the Scarman Report, Ch.6 para.36. On the formation of Catholic defence groups see ch.6 paras.6-11. On the role of vigilantes on both sides, see para.30. On Protestant vigilantes see paras.34 and 35. See also Sunday Times Insight team Ulster (which relies mainly on the Scarman report but contains some other material) pp.126-142. Boulton, D. The UVF: Anatomy of a Loyalist Rebellion Dublin, Torc Books (1973) pp.108-129, focuses on the activities of the main group, the Shankill Defence Association which was particularly active in arranging 'swaps' between homes of Catholics in Protestant areas and Protestants in Catholic areas.

119. On assassinations of Catholics by Protestant paramilitaries see, Dillon, M. and Lehané, D. Political Murder in Northern Ireland Harmondsworth, Penguin (1973); Dillon, M. The Shankill Butchers London, Hutchinson (1989); Dillon, M. The Dirty War London, Hutchinson (1990). See also, "The assassination squads" Hibernia 4.8.72, p.4; "Behind the assassinations" Hibernia 25.10.74.

120. See "Behind the loyalist bombs" Hibernia 16.11.73, p.8, and "Loyalist bombs: more to come?" Hibernia 15.4.77.

121. The following contemporary reports give an idea of how internal feuding has been endemic to the UDA. See, "The UDA split" Hibernia 4.8.72; "The UDA split" Hibernia 2.2.73; "The UDA, UVF and UFF" Hibernia 22.6.73; "The Tommy Herron shooting" Hibernia 21.9.73; "UDA: hot at the top" Hibernia 24.1.75; "Harding Smith's last farewell" Hibernia 18.4.75.

122. On racketeering in the liquor trade see "Belfast's protected publicans" Hibernia 26.3.76. On more recent indications of the extent of loyalist racketeering, see, "Gangster law" Belfast Telegraph 20.8.87 and, "Four loyalists jailed for NI extortion racket" Irish Times 1.2.90. Tax fraud and protection rackets, notably in the construction industry, remain staples of both loyalist and republican paramilitaries.

123. In addition to the general references at note 117 above, see on this point "The loyalist tightrope" Hibernia 19.7.74.

124. See for instance O'Malley, The Uncivil Wars p.118.

125. See O'Malley, The Uncivil Wars especially pp.319-321.

See also, "The independence option -- one road back to loyalist rule" Hibernia 25.7.75; "The UDA plans for Ulster independence" Ulster (the UDA's magazine) Vol. 2 (1) 1979.

126. Moore, M. and Crimmins, J. "The Case for Negotiated Independence" in O'Leary and McGarry, The Future of Northern Ireland p.249.

127. Fitzpatrick, B. "Interview with Andy Tyrie" Crane Bag Vol. 4 (2) 1980, pp.652-659. Tyrie (at that time leader of the UDA) discusses the text on which the UDA's revisionist view of Protestant identity is based. It is Adamson, I. The Cruthin Bangor (Co.Down), Donard Publishing Company (1974). A.T.Q. Stewart discusses the Cruthin as part of a wider theme, discrediting the myth that "...the true Irish today are descended from a pure Celtic race". The Narrow Ground pp.21-30, especially pp.29-30.

128. Moore and Crimmins describe the UDA's document Common sense (1987) as "...the most enlightened and moderate document to have emerged from the Unionist side since the Troubles began" ("The case for Negotiated Independence" p.253). The document acknowledges shared responsibility of both communities for the violence, and advocates reconciliation through a negotiated constitution reflecting 'consensus government' and a justiciable bill of rights. The negotiations would be confined to Northern Ireland's Catholics and Protestants, a stipulation which would alienate republicans and nationalists on the one hand, and conventional Unionists on the other. The preface and introduction of Common Sense are reproduced in Rowthorn, B. and Wayne, N. Northern Ireland: the Political Economy of Conflict Cambridge, Polity Press (1988) Appendix 5, pp.185-188.

129. It had been imposed by O'Neill in 1966.

CHAPTER NINE

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE BREAK UP OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST AND AFRIKANER NATIONALIST COALITIONS

INTRODUCTION

From the accounts given so far of the break up of Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism, it is possible to compare and contrast the balance of forces between reform and reaction in each case by focusing on the political parties and extra-parliamentary groups into which the respective sides grouped themselves. Such a comparison will provide the primary focus of this chapter.

A second possible dimension of comparison presents itself in these two cases however. Both Afrikaner Nationalists and Ulster Unionists created and maintained partisan state structures -- especially in law-enforcement agencies -- during their periods of effective one-party rule. As the basis of unilateral rule crumbled and reforms aimed at incorporating the previously-excluded progressed, the possibility that dissident ultras might use state structures to obstruct reforms arose. This aspect of the dissolution of ruling coalitions will be discussed as the chapter's second focus.

REFORM AND THE BACKLASH AT THE BALLOT BOX AND IN THE STREETS

The breakup of the Ulster Unionist and Afrikaner Nationalist coalitions represent variations on the 'backlash' phenomenon, in which formerly privileged or dominant groups react against the threatened loss of their advantageous status. Taken to extremes, this kind of reaction can mean that;

As formerly powerful groups decline and lose their influence, they may lash out with enough vigour and emotion to overwhelm the political process.¹

This is what happened in May 1974 when the Ulster Workers' Council strike rendered inoperable the power-sharing agreement between Protestant and Catholic parties which had been carefully brokered by the British and Irish governments. The delicate process of bargaining, negotiation, third-party mediation and interstate diplomacy, was overwhelmed by the direct-action initiative of workers and paramilitaries. To achieve this, they first outflanked and then incorporated those 'extremist' political figures who were their ostensible leaders in the rejectionist cause. No such dramatic central event marks the unravelling of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition and the unfolding of a complex and at times fragile negotiation process between a reformed National Party and the ANC (although the rider 'not at the time of writing' should perhaps be added to this comparative assessment).

This suggests that although there are similarities in the elements present in both situations -- the social forces, political actors, policies and ideologies -- there are important differences in the dynamics of the relationships between those elements, which should be highlighted.

One essential area of contrast has been the nature of reform in the two contexts. 'reform Nationalism' has been a much more durable, resilient and flexible phenomenon than 'reform Unionism'. It has represented much more significant social forces, has commanded much greater resources and has in all significant ways been much better equipped to fight off challenges from the political right. Probably all political ideologies contain provision for continuity and preservation on the one hand and change and transformation on the other. But Ulster Unionism has been very largely an ideology of preservation while Afrikaner Nationalism has been very largely an ideology of transformation.

The central myth of Unionism is a siege, that of Afrikaner Nationalism is a heroic journey, and this difference symbolises these contrasting dimensions. Ulster Unionism itself was an improvisation, a pragmatic response to the impracticality of saving all of Ireland for the Union. This response created a new identity that of 'Ulsterman' or, to change the emphasis, this identity was discovered and elaborated. But improvisation and discovery were put to the service of immobility, not transformation. In contrast, the survival of the nation which Afrikaner Nationalism discovered and elaborated, depended on its transformation from a people of labourers and farmers to one of managers, administrators and professionals in both public and private sectors of an advanced, industrial economy. While the years of Nationalist power in South Africa saw impressive economic growth and development, the Unionists presided over an advanced, industrial economy in stagnation and decline. While the class structure of Afrikaner Nationalism underwent far-reaching change, by the 1970s, that of Unionism was little altered from the years of the coalition's formation. Its divisions were reproduced at a higher level of security

and subsistence by the welfare state, but they were not fundamentally altered by the spread of modest affluence which rescued the unskilled and unemployed from stark poverty. Certainly, there was nothing in the way of spectacular social mobility.

Behind Unionism's siege walls, not much had been going on, but within the circle of wagons with which Afrikaner Nationalism habitually faced a hostile world, there was furious, and innovative activity.

In these respects, when P.W. Botha began to talk in the early 1980s of the need to 'adapt or die', there were enough people in his core audience for whom change, transformation, and movement had some experiential resonance to make his slogan ideologically plausible. What is more, outside his core audience there was considerable potential for incorporating support from English speakers (on whom the Nationalists came to rely for electoral victories over the right), and from coloureds and Indians. This useful strategic resource was not available to O'Neill, nor his reluctantly reforming successors. Northern Ireland's divisions between Unionist and Nationalist are, comparatively speaking, sharp and simple, precluding much opportunity of one attracting support from the other. There is no vacant political space for a reforming government to move into and occupy.

Moreover, there was an urgency to the agenda of reform in South Africa which was lacking in Northern Ireland. The abyss to which Botha could point was a deep and a threatening one. The compelling facts of demography and the palpable failure of apartheid were not grasped by all Afrikaners. But there were enough of them -- especially among the intellectual and governing elite -- to make reform

a viable proposition and to hold the allegiance of the substantial numbers of their compatriots who were prepared to follow strong leadership whether or not they were convinced by policies. By contrast, although the crisis faced by the Unionists in the 1960s -- economic decline, the 'new' Catholic opposition, ominously growing British interest, electoral defection of working class Protestants -- was no illusion, it did not have the apocalyptic quality of the Nationalists' predicament. Protestants felt themselves to be a legitimate majority; insofar as they understood that Catholics had grievances, they felt them to be minor; they carried no burden of injustice and failure comparable to the legacy of apartheid; they were not the focus of attention from a disapproving world.

Reform was an ambiguous strategy in both societies. To the marginal and the zealous on the governments' sides -- the ultras -- it meant betrayal. To the opposition in both cases, it meant cosmetic tinkering with illegitimate structures. To those supporters who remained with the governments, it meant ill-defined hope of stability and social progress without noticeable loss of material or status privileges.

In fact, reformers were quite explicit in both cases. O'Neill made it quite clear that the purpose of reform was the preservation and strengthening of the union with Britain which was, ostensibly, the focus of Protestant identity. From Botha onwards, Nationalist reformers made it clear that the survival of white security and prosperity, and of the Afrikaner nation, meant reform. But O'Neill's reforms appeared vague and tentative; their justification seemed weak and inappropriate to many Unionists, stemming as it did from the aspiration to make Northern Ireland more like metropolitan Britain. This was unlikely to placate Irish

Nationalists and certain to ruffle loyalist sensibilities. Both of them could be relied upon to squeeze the middle ground relentlessly.

Afrikaner Nationalist reformers were better able to manipulate the claims of justice and self interest into a powerful (if not always coherent) semblance of historical necessity. Although justice and self-interest are rivals as well as partners, their tensions were held in check and all reactionary challenges -- at the level of electoral competition at least -- were held off with impressive consistency, from the late 1970s to the white referendum of 1992 and beyond. There were costs however, and these were paid in damage to the integrity and momentum of reform as a position, especially in the 'middle passage' of the years of the states of emergency.

The tensions were held in check, and the damage was done, in two principal ways. The first involved vigorous security policies, especially a savage counter-revolutionary onslaught in the latter half of the 1980s aimed at those deemed to be enemies of the state. The second required obfuscation and camouflage to be developed to a fine art in concealing (perhaps from the reformers themselves) the exact consequences of individual reforms. It was a remarkable achievement (in its dubious way) to hold together for so long a reform project which was so internally incoherent and ambiguous, while at the same time reproducing a conclusive electoral majority for its overall direction. This achievement reflected the autonomy and considerable resources available to the state machine so assiduously built by the Afrikaner Nationalists in the forty years of their rule. This autonomy and these resources were simply not available to Ulster Unionist reformers. Not least of the resources in question was the availability of educated,

trained and willing state cadres to do the technocratic, ideological, and when it came to the crunch, repressive donkey work necessary for the reform project.

Where in Nationalist-ruled South Africa we see something very like a political ruling class at work, in Northern Ireland we see something more like a vacuum of power and leadership. Between 1885 and 1922, Ulster's resistance to Home Rule had been led by a potent combination of landowners, the Belfast industrial bourgeoisie and sections of the British ruling class.² By the 1960s, landowners had ceased to play a leading social role; the influence of metropolitan capital, economic decline and economic rationalisation had curbed the leadership potential of the local industrial bourgeoisie; and with the disappearance of empire, Ireland had lost virtually all interest for what remained of the metropolitan class which had encouraged Ulster's stand.³ Similarly, the Anglo-Irish imperial military caste which played such a strong part in Ulster's primary resistance, had simply ceased to exist.

While in South Africa, a bureaucratic state and a bureaucratic party provided the backbone of a political ruling class, in Northern Ireland, the narrow range of Unionism's ambitions meant that neither the resources nor even the need for such a thing was evident. The provincialism which so shocked British politicians and administrators when they took control in the early 1970s⁴ highlight the lack of vision, stature and energy which characterised the Stormont administration. These shortcomings extended to the right-wing opposition too. On neither side of the Unionist divide was there a numerous and coherent cadre of political leadership which could take and retain the initiative in the interests of reform or reaction. With a mixture of euphoria, consternation, and

bitter resentment, rank and file loyalists found themselves completely without the leadership their fathers had taken for granted. They found it from among their own ranks. Paisley was rescued from marginalised zealotry and became a national (even to some extent, international) figure. Vigilantes and worker-populists flitted between the shadows and the limelight. He and they proved more durable and influential than the erstwhile converts to reform and the minor establishment figures -- like Craig and the relative nonentities at the head of the Official Unionist Party -- who led the 'respectable' opposition to reform. But no-one had the authority or the resources to reconstitute the Unionist alliance, one way or the other.

It can be argued then, that the different trajectories of dissolution in Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism can be explained in part by the different capacities of reformers to attract and retain support. Another explanatory possibility lies in the differing patterns of political violence in Northern Ireland and South Africa. Protestants and Afrikaners have had different experiences of political violence, and security issues have presented themselves to each in different ways. It has to be noted however that these gaps of experience and perception may well be closing as the demise of exclusive white rule becomes imminent.

Nationalist rule in South Africa and Unionist rule in Northern Ireland have both been the targets of armed struggle, and political change in both has taken place in the context of complex patterns of insurgent, state, 'backlash', communal, and criminal violence. Ulster Protestants and the security forces which they feel to be their defenders however, have been the targets of much more direct, sustained, and intense attack than Afrikaners. 1972 was the key year in stiffening Protestants' resistance to

reform. It is scarcely surprising, given the security statistics, that they felt they were threatened by a situation of complete lawlessness. In 1972, there were 10 628 shooting incidents, 1 382 bomb explosions (in addition, 471 bombs were defused) and 1 931 armed robberies; there were 467 deaths, 485 policemen were injured, 578 army personnel, and 1 838 civilians.⁵ It has to be stressed that these statistics refer to a population of no more than one and a half million in total, and that the incidents took place overwhelmingly in the vicinities of ordinary peoples' homes and workplaces, in a state which in places measures geographically no more than 50 kilometres across.

It is true that the 1972 figures represent a peak which never before or since has been reached. It is equally true that counter-insurgent and Protestant violence account for an appreciable number of these incidents and casualties. But Protestants overwhelmingly understood the violence in terms of the Provisional IRA's campaign against the security forces and British rule.⁶ It is scarcely surprising that in this context militant Protestants turned to paramilitary and workerist organisations to carry out revenge attacks on Catholics, confront the British government over security issues and ultimately overthrow the power-sharing executive. The British government's security policy of 'Ulsterisation' (beginning in the mid-seventies), which placed as much responsibility as possible for security on locally recruited forces, meant that even when security force casualties were reduced, they were more directly borne by Ulster Protestants. The regular murder of part-time security force members, in border areas, at their workplaces or in their homes, led to the frequent sale of Protestant farms to Catholics, leading Protestant politicians to talk of 'genocide'.⁷

Despite the militant rhetoric of armed struggle,⁸ the ANC did not mount a sustained and effective campaign of violence against whites in general and the security forces in particular, in the major population centres of South Africa. Casualties of political violence both before and after the suspension of armed struggle by the ANC in 1990 were borne overwhelmingly by black opponents of the government, black civilians, and blacks suspected by the ANC of collaborating in one way or another with state structures of control. It is true that some white farming communities were (literally) in the front line of the armed struggle and lived under very stressful conditions, but nothing resembling the continuous toll of 'their' security force members has marked the Afrikaners' experience of political violence in the way that has the Ulster Protestants'.

The successful portrayal of insurgency as principally a phenomenon of 'border' war (fought largely in Southern Angola), and the army's ability to keep white casualties in this war to a minimum, were important factors enabling the Nationalist government to retain the confidence of the white electorate. Even when insurgency in the townships required large-scale counter-insurgency action, the isolation of these black residential areas from 'white' South Africa -- achieved not only by geographical separation but ruthless control of information -- and the fact that blacks bore the overwhelming brunt of casualties on both sides, meant that the direct costs of political violence to whites in general remained minimal.

In some respects, Northern Ireland is a society as divided as South Africa, but it is much more intimate, spatially concentrated and (relatively speaking) open to reportage and investigation. Under these conditions, Protestants' share of civilian and security force casualties has been not only

relatively, but absolutely greater than their Afrikaner counterparts and in all likelihood, subjectively a much greater collective trauma.

The differences do not end there however. Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism both depended for their grip on power on control of state organs of repression. Indeed, sectarian or ethnic policing was also an indispensable part of their mobilising strategies. An early casualty of the conflict between reform, backlash and insurgency in Northern Ireland was the Unionists' control of security. The constitutional fact of Westminster's assumption of responsibility for security was embodied in the abolition of the 'B' Specials and the short-lived attempt to civilianise the RUC, followed by a longer-term programme to professionalise it and render it less partial. The unpalatable (for loyalists) principle of army supremacy in security matters was complemented by the strategic fact that the police could not operate in most Catholic areas after 1969 without army protection. The loss of local control was completed and formalised by the proroguing of Stormont in 1972.

Every aspect of this loss of control was felt keenly by loyalists, and indeed the first major Protestant riots were provoked by the Hunt Report on the RUC. Nothing fostered the growth of the Protestant paramilitaries like the coincidence between the escalation of the Provisional IRA's campaign, and the end of local control of security. No such threat undermined the credibility of reform Nationalism until the negotiations for a transitional authority reached an advanced stage in early 1993. Only at this late stage have Afrikaners been faced with the prospect of seeing control of the security forces pass from the exclusive hands of their compatriots. Although at the time of writing the precise

details of the emerging agreements on security force control (and the longer-term goals of transforming and restructuring them) are far from clear, the ANC's assurances on power-sharing, and on the security of tenure of administrators and bureaucrats suggest that changes may not be drastic, at least in the first instance. Despite this, it must be noted that with increasing white exposure to criminal and political violence⁹ and the prospect of white control of security being heavily diluted, if not lost completely in the medium to long term, the gap between the experience of Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners may be closing.

One area in which the gap has already closed is highlighted by the demise since 1990 of the political system through which whites expressed their identities and aspirations. The Conservative Party's central demand between the 1990 reforms and the whites-only referendum was for a whites-only general election to test the acceptability of de Klerk's reforms. The end of the white polity parallels Britain's foreclosure of the Stormont system in 1972 and refusal since then to return to a simple majority devolved government in Northern Ireland. The loss of parliamentary institutions in which Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism found their fullest political expression and the basis of their claim to legitimacy for the states they controlled represent an important experience in common. But there are differences too.

Alternative opportunities for political self-expression were offered to both Unionists and Afrikaner Nationalists, but the configurations of the respective tests were rather different. In the whites-only referendum of 1992, Afrikaners voted as a part (albeit a majority) of a larger white electorate, and clearly recorded divided allegiances, voting in large numbers on both sides of the substantial majority

in favour of reform. When the various strands of Unionism treated the Westminster general election of February 1974 as a referendum on the Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing reforms, Protestants voted overwhelmingly against them. All that has been said so far to distinguish the strength of reform in South Africa from its weakness in Northern Ireland is relevant in explaining this divergence, but three further factors contribute to an explanation.

The first concerns the degree of inclusiveness of the reform agreements. The Nationalist government in South Africa was able to conclude an agreement with the ANC which embodied a de facto end to the armed struggle, with a de jure agreement clearly on the cards. The APLA campaign of political violence against whites had not yet got under way¹⁰, and at this stage black political movements to the left of the ANC seemed to pose little threat. In Northern Ireland however, the process which led to Sunningdale and power-sharing excluded the IRA, which adopted a violently rejectionist stance towards 'solutions' short of a British declaration of intent to withdraw. The reform process in Northern Ireland was accompanied by a ruthless and implacable continuation of the IRA's campaign, and the incentives for Protestants to vote for reform did not include an immediate cessation of violence, far less an already existing one, such as Afrikaners enjoyed at the time of the referendum.

Secondly, Afrikaners, and the rest of the white electorate, were being asked to validate a process and not an outcome. De Klerk and his government were able to make assurances that majority rule would be diluted and contained;¹¹ no such alternative was available in February 1972 to the British government and the rump of Unionist reformers led by Faulkner. In February 1974, on the other hand, the Unionists were invited to express their views on a fait accompli in

which the aspirations of the constitutional Catholic opposition in Northern Ireland and of the Irish government had clearly been prominent.

Thirdly, in casting their votes (and indeed, subsequently in resorting to direct action) it is likely that many Protestants were mindful that the consequences of rejection were cushioned by the involvement of Britain. Unable to tolerate a vacuum of power or a chaotic stalemate, the British government would remain to institutionalise the crisis. No such safety net beckoned for South African whites, and this factor was played hard by the government in promoting a 'yes' majority in the referendum.

These three factors confirmed the already strong profile of reform among the white electorate and strengthen the contrast between the two movements. It makes an interesting comparative sidelight on the two situations to note that a referendum was also used in Northern Ireland. But in this instance, the orientation was towards the status quo rather than the invitation to endorse change which was offered to white South Africans. The electorate was invited to choose whether the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic should remain.¹² 'Reform' or 'the reform process' were not directly offered for validation either before or after a 'settlement' was produced.

Thus far, a number of elements have been discussed which have been present in the dissolution of the coalitions which supported both Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism. These are, the resources available to reformers, the respective communities' experience of violence, the loss of control of security forces and the loss of political institutions which expressed identity in the form of self-determination. With differing shades of nuance and degrees

of emphasis, these factors made themselves felt on the social groups which made up the support bases for Afrikaner Nationalism and Ulster Unionism and on the conflict between reform and reaction which was at the heart of each coalition's dissolution. It will be useful now to summarise some essential points of difference between the movements on which these factors of situation and circumstance acted.

Both were coalitions of workers, farmers and industrial and commercial classes, bound together by ties of ideology and interest which included in common, settler, ethnic and populist motifs. But the exact nature of these elements and the way they stood in relation to each other were very different.

Perhaps the essential difference was that the Ulster Unionist coalition was looser and its elements -- especially the working class -- retained an independence of identity and action not characteristic of their Afrikaner counterparts. The latter were incorporated in a more comprehensive and highly structured way. This was because the South African situation was more directly and essentially colonial -- certainly it retained that character for much longer -- than Northern Ireland. The demographic ratio between settler and native, the social and developmental difference between them, the autonomy of settler power and distance from metropolitan influence, are all factors which conditioned this dimension of difference. Under these conditions, Afrikaner Nationalism could not afford the traditions of independent militance which characterised the populist and sectarian traditions in loyalism. Conveniently enough, the independence of the white working class had been destroyed by Smuts' government in 1922. Thereafter the Nationalists were able to offer in its place a high degree of state protection through colour bars,

sheltered employment and extensive opportunities for state-sponsored social mobility. The corollary to these privileges was a ruthless and complete imposition of formally inferior status on the native population.

In the absence of such state protection, working-class Protestants had to affirm their identity, status, and material needs in the territorial displays and rituals of Orangeism, bouts of electoral independence in ultra-sectarian or labourist directions, the thinly-disguised vigilantism of the 'B' Specials and a capacity to threaten communal uproar in the streets or at the workplace. Orangeism and loyalism are not the province of poets, professors, editors, theologians and ideologues in the way that Afrikaner Nationalism was and (although in much reduced terms) remains. Ranting oratory from the pulpit and shouted slogans in the street, resting on a bedrock of virtually mute immobilism, rather than measured abstractions, are their habitual forms of expression. Afrikaner Nationalists built monumental megaliths and gather at them in their thousands to pray and pay homage, before going home to organise and intrigue. Loyalists paint icons on their own houses, decorate their streets in a blaze of colour, sing, dance, burn effigies and hurl defiance at their ancestral enemies, who live only yards away.¹³ Immemorially, Orange celebrations are poised uneasily between carnival and riot, the dominant tone being decided by the current state of communal tension. The roots of solidarity are similar in the Afrikaner and Ulster Protestant political cultures, but their ultimate expressions are rather different.

It would not do to carry this contrast too far. Loyalism and Orangeism are not synonymous with Unionism, but without the crude and colourful exaggerations of these siblings it is a pallid and vacuous doctrine. Not all Afrikaner Nationalists

are intellectuals, and, especially in its rise to power and the early period of its rule, Afrikaner Nationalism had its share of raw, popular vigour which the contemporary Afrikaner right wing has inherited to some extent. But there are very strong strains of pragmatism and idealism which seek explanation, guidance and justification in adapting to changing circumstances in a characteristically intellectual way. This tendency, in all probability the dominant one, has acted as a conductor for the no doubt deeply-felt emotions which Afrikaner Nationalism excites in its adherents. Like Giliomee,¹⁴ Marks and Trapido¹⁵ cite Rudé¹⁶ when they discuss how "...the more 'structured' ideas of the ruling class and intelligentsia .. have interacted with diffuse and heterogeneous popular belief" in the context of Afrikaner Nationalism. Unlike Afrikaner Nationalism, in the case of Ulster Unionism, such interaction scarcely existed at all. Ulster Unionism has had no comparable elaborated framework and no class of intellectual custodians and cultural entrepreneurs to contain and isolate the more volatile elements in its support base. Loyalism and Orangeism are lived and possessed at a popular level -- in an absolutely literal sense they are acted out at street level on a virtually daily basis -- in a way that is simply not characteristic of Afrikaner Nationalism.

The issues of difference are not merely those of political culture, ideology, consciousness and identity however. The material circumstances of Ulster Protestant working-class life have had practical political consequences of a very important nature, which set up striking contrasts with the situation of the Afrikaner right wing. Despite some changes effected by the welfare state, new investment and the re-organisation of industry, Belfast in the 1960s and 1970s was still organised very much as a 19th-century industrial city. High density, informally segregated housing, often in the

shadow of factories and in close proximity to 'shatter zones' marking boundaries with Catholic areas, defined the spatial organisation of Belfast working-class life. Working-class employment tended to be concentrated in sizable concerns, employing large numbers of workers. Protestants continued to dominate these heavy industries, especially in the skilled trades, notably in the shipyards.

What the shipyards were to the economy of Northern Ireland, and to Ulster Unionism, the mines were to the South African economy and Afrikaner Nationalism. By the time of crisis and dissolution of these respective coalitions, neither industry was as central economically or politically as before, due to the growth of South Africa's manufacturing industry, and the steep decline in the competitiveness of British shipbuilding. But the fact that all recent attempts to kindle white worker solidarity in South Africa have revolved around the white Mine Workers' Union, and the leadership roles played by Protestant ship-building workers in LAW, the UWC and the UDA, reflect the continuing political vigour of these two industries. Despite the essential symmetry of industrial vanguardism and political mobilisation in the two situations, there are very important differences. The white miners who threatened to strike and mobilised for the AWB in Welkom in 1992, are a small minority, clinging tenaciously on to officially-sanctioned privileges in an industry numerically, and, increasingly politically dominated by the organised African workers whom they supervise. The 'disciplining' of the African workers is the responsibility of the mine companies' paramilitary security departments, or in extremity the regular police.

By contrast, Protestant shipyard workers predominate in the yards, and a traditional feature of sectarian conflict has been to expel Catholic workers in times of tension. In other

enterprises, expulsion and violence are not necessarily employed, but the creation of a hostile, sectarian atmosphere by the display of Orange and loyalist icons and regalia has the clear objective of disciplining such Catholics as do work there.¹⁷ Self-help, then, rather than legal proscriptions, codes of industrial practice sanctioned by management, or outright state repression, have played an important part in maintaining identity and privilege for Protestant workers.

In patterns of employment and housing, then, many Protestants lived in conditions which were highly conducive to mobilisation for direct action, through whatever combination of solidarity and intimidation. Whether in the collection of dues, the exaction of services (like patrols for neighbourhood defence), acquiescence in paramilitary violence, mobilisation for work stoppages, demonstrations, 'no-go areas' or riots, Protestant worker and paramilitary organisations were able to capitalise on these conditions. In short, Northern Ireland exhibited to quite a high degree spatial features of social and economic organisation inherited from 19th century patterns of industrialisation which made central political control vulnerable to mass mobilisation and direct action from below. This vulnerability was accentuated by the relative weakness of the Northern Ireland state and, despite the clarity of its status in constitutional law, ambiguities in political practice over the nature and extent of its autonomy. This ambiguity persisted even after the assumption of direct rule by Westminster, to the extent that the British government continued to treat the population of Northern Ireland as an independently self-determining political community.¹⁸

It is clear that leaders on South Africa's right are alive to the strategic possibilities of a political strike very

much along the lines of the UWC stoppage. Indeed many of their threats and pronouncements sound like copybook adaptations of the UWC example.¹⁹ Superficially, a comparative balance sheet between the two is fairly easy to draw up, and it is unfavourable to the South African right on numerous counts.

Firstly, the South African economy is much larger, geographically much more dispersed, and functionally more diverse, making it much less vulnerable than the small, concentrated, declining and dependent economy of Northern Ireland. In effect, the success of the 1974 strike and the fate of the power-sharing executive were decided by the withdrawal of labour at just one power station. Similarly, Afrikaner workers are not concentrated geographically, residentially and occupationally in the way that Protestant workers in Northern Ireland are. No serious account of the 1974 strike disputes that intimidation was necessary to the success of the strike, even if its role was exaggerated at first through wishful thinking and government propaganda. So limited are the prospects of intimidation in the South African context, that an Afrikaner Nationalist strike would have to achieve paralysing effects virtually by solidarity alone. A number of factors combine to make this a tall order; the declining purchase of white workers in the economy and their increasing distance from actual production processes; the absence of any tradition of white worker militancy since the 1922 strike; divisions between English and Afrikaner workers and divisions within Afrikaner Nationalism; the continuing viability of reform as a political position for whites, based on the prospect of continuing white participation in government after the first universal franchise election and continuing moderation on the part of the ANC leadership; the likelihood that white management would not passively await the political and

economic outcomes of any white worker strike, but would work vigorously to defeat it.

Secondly, Ulster Protestant workers enjoyed a moral ascendancy of numbers which would be denied to the Afrikaner right. Protestant workers constituted a majority at most if not all of the major industrial concerns which were crucial to the success of the 1974 strike. The British government insisted on treating Northern Ireland as an independently self-determining community, and the February 1974 Westminster election seemed to demonstrate the illegitimacy of the power-sharing agreement. The IRA's continuing campaign of violence made it plain that Protestant concessions and reform had not bought peace, and this added to the strikers' self-perceptions of legitimacy. It is likely too that all these factors contributed to the British government's passivity; if the strikers had less of a case in these terms, perhaps the government would have moved more decisively against them.

Thirdly, a strike of white workers called by the Afrikaner Nationalist right would carry a very high risk of a violent backlash from elements of black political movements, and more or less spontaneous communal violence, especially if the strike were accompanied by violence from white paramilitary groups. Altogether such an action would be a far riskier proposition than the UWC stoppage, whose leaders could gamble on the capacity of the British-led civil administration and security forces to prevent social chaos and a complete vacuum of power in the event of the strike's success. For this reason, the ultras could count on the acquiescence and even passive support of very large numbers of more moderate Protestants. No such guarantee of stability is available in South Africa, and many potential strikers could be deterred by the realisation that the prospects of

success are even more intimidating than those of failure in such drastic direct action. Frank Wright emphasises the importance of Britain's guarantee of stability and indirectly encapsulates a fundamental contrast with South Africa;

Once degeneration into territorial breakdown has occurred, it is exceedingly difficult to restore any kind of peaceful co-existence between territorial fragments. The breakdown itself exposes the collapse of the original objectives of conflict and largely destroys the entity for which the contest took place in the beginning: the state apparatus.....The escape from all this is external powers who are themselves committed to preserving peace and can rely on a large part of the internal population who want the same thing. Boring and unexciting as this conclusion must be, it is what stands between Northern Ireland and the fate of Cyprus and Lebanon.²⁰

Nothing comparable stands between South Africa and such a fate. This factor is likely to weigh heavily in the minds of the majority of whites, on whom the small minority of militant ultras must rely for the success of any mass direct action.

Fourthly, a key ingredient (many would argue, the key ingredient) in the success of the UWC's strike, was the British government's inability, or unwillingness to take vigorous pre-emptive and retaliatory counter-measures to break the strike. In fact it is likely that the combination of the previous three factors -- the balance of demographic, political and industrial forces, the claims of the strikers to a legitimate case, and the ability of British state resources to guarantee stability even while remaining passive -- shaped this response. In any case, the situation in Northern Ireland was in no way crucial for the survival

of the British state, it was an annoying sideshow. For any South African government and state administration, the same is not true. A successful political strike by the white right would spell the end of the South African state and all the complications of communal and international co-existence which that eventuality would entail for the region. No government, whatever its complexion, could afford merely to hold the ring and await the outcome. The vigorous counter-measures which it would doubtless order, would pose stark questions of its servants in the administration and the security forces.

But more than forty years of assiduous state-building have ingrained loyalty to the state, and to political control in white political culture. It would be surprising if any government which embodied a recognisable degree of continuity with past state structures, could not count on substantial numbers of these loyalists to defeat a strike. It is likely that they would be supplemented by blacks and pragmatic whites, for whom the uncertainties of civil war and a partitioned white enclave are even more threatening than the prospect of black rule.

It could be argued that to compare the balance of forces in Northern Ireland in 1974 with South Africa at present is wrong and that the true historical parallels are between the situation of Afrikaner Nationalists now, and the Ulster Unionists' successful forcing of partition on Irish Nationalists and British governments between 1910 and 1922. Even if this argument is allowed, on the grounds that, like the Unionists in that period, the Afrikaner Nationalist right is prepared to abandon much of the territory its members control at present and settle (admittedly in greatly varying degrees and forms) for a much smaller state in which

to exercise their self-determination, the comparison is still unfavourable to them.

Unlike Ulster Unionism, which between 1910 and 1922 was at the height of its power to mobilise virtually every Ulster Protestant into political and paramilitary formations, Afrikaner Nationalism, in the sense of a movement dedicated to exclusivist self-determination, can, after a decade of fraternal conflict, claim the allegiance of only about half of white Afrikaners, and even this support is fragmented among groups which have quite serious differences with each other. In addition, partition in Northern Ireland was underwritten by the power of the British empire against the half-hearted irredentism of a militarily insignificant Irish successor state, which was too preoccupied with its own civil war to regard co-existence with another state in Ireland as matter for anything more than rhetoric and gesture. Afrikaner Nationalists are unlikely to enjoy such a favourable context for their secessionist project. Establishing their own state and co-existing with a demographically larger and economically more powerful neighbour, quite possibly under hostile international scrutiny, will be much harder than the sheltered route to secession which favoured the Unionists.

The effect of the foregoing arguments is to suggest that although similar elements were present in the dissolution of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism, the specific historical forces and actors presented themselves in different ways. Differences in state-building, political culture and ideology, and in the material circumstances of the social groups which made up the respective coalitions, made the crisis which faced Ulster Unionism more hospitable to successful mass-based direct action of paramilitary and

worker organisations, than that which faced Afrikaner Nationalism.

REFORM, THE BACKLASH AND STATE ORGANS

It would be wrong to analyse and discuss the backlash phenomenon as if it were exclusively confined to irregular formations which claim mass membership and stand apart from, indeed in opposition to, the state. Other initiatives are possible when components of previously well-integrated coalitions take on themselves freedom of independent action and these possibilities exist within state organs as well as outside and in opposition to them.

As a result, the range of relationships between the principal protagonists in conflicts between reform and reaction is a complex one. The main players are, reforming governments (and the parties supporting them), state organs charged with carrying out the reforms, maintaining order and prosecuting campaigns of counter-insurgency and factions of 'ultras' organised into political, paramilitary and industrial groups. Reforming governments generally like to offer a simplified portrait of these relationships, in which they are the moderate centre, holding the ground between a vengeful right and an irresponsible left and commanding a loyal and professional state apparatus. In practice, a number of factors may make this somewhat self-interested designation inadequate.

Firstly, reforming governments may be forced or may choose to be tolerant of ultra groups, even when their orientations and actions are clearly subversive. Perhaps they are sufficiently numerous and/or well-armed and organised to make their coercion a hazardous business, especially when the government is fighting a war of counter-insurgency with

anti-regime forces. Politicians and generals are usually acutely alive to the dangers of a two-front war. It is also possible that coercing ultras might upset the balance between convinced reformers and sceptical hard-liners who yet remain in the government and governing party. Such coercion might in any case strain the loyalties of those who continue to support the government and party, but harbour sympathies for ultra groups (perhaps seeing their existence as an insurance policy), without endorsing all their methods. A far right-wing threat can, moreover, be a useful strategic resource for a reforming government in negotiations with anti-regime groups and in mobilising support from the centre of all parties. This threat can define its reform credentials more clearly, set apparent limits to the possibilities of reform, and illustrate the destabilising consequences of actions by anti-regime forces.

Any (or any combination) of these prohibitions and incentives can complicate the relationships between reforming governments and the backlash to them, edging them towards tolerance or even collusion. This is especially true when the backlash spans a whole continuum of actions from constitutional political opposition, to outright terrorism and groups both within and outside state organs. The most extreme version of a collusive relationship would be when a reforming government uses state organs -- on a 'deniable' basis -- to pursue a double agenda in which reform is accompanied by destabilisation of opponents.

Secondly, state organs themselves may harbour resistance to reform objectives and policies. Even this designation is not simple, since at least two sources of motivation, corporate and ideological, can be suggested. Corporate motivation itself may be of two sorts. In the first, the material and status interests of the bureaucrats, soldiers and policemen

themselves may be put at risk by policies of reform. Another possibility arises, especially in the case of security forces prosecuting campaigns of counter-insurgency, when corporate professional judgment is offended by reform policies. Soldiers and policemen may believe that their own and comrades' past efforts and sacrifices are being wasted, or they may simply be unable to make the transition from 'dirty war' exigencies to those of negotiation.

Ideological motivation involves identification (for the most part necessarily covert) of soldiers, policemen and bureaucrats with the ultras' position of resistance to reform, on the basis of loyalty to the essential verities around which the original coalition was mobilised. In this sense they may feel their ethnic identity impinge heavily on the demands of corporate loyalty.

Soldiers, bureaucrats and policemen who are impelled into direct action against reform policies, do not necessarily identify themselves with paramilitary ultra groups. Whether their motives are corporate or even ideological, they may be repelled by the irregular, ruffianly, or even downright psychopathic aspects of paramilitarism, viewing them at best as a necessary evil. On the other hand, ultra elements may infiltrate state organs, especially security forces, in order to gain access to training, equipment and a favourable operational base to work against reform from within.

In the light of these suggestions -- that the relationships between reformers and ultras are not necessarily of simple opposition, that the backlash phenomenon can be found in state organs as well as in ultra opposition groups, and that resistance from within state organs can stem from a variety of motivations -- it is worthwhile looking again at the crises and dissolution of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner

Nationalism to assess what part, if any, state organs have played in harbouring ultra resistance to reform.

State Organs, Loyalist Dissidence and the Breakup of the Ulster Unionist Coalition

Some early aspects of the Northern Ireland crisis suggest that 'ultra' attitudes within the state itself may have played a part in the developing disorder. The problem focuses on the question of partisan policing. Certainly, the RUC treated the problem of political protest which accompanied the altered political atmosphere of O'Neillism as one of counter-insurgency in the context of a sectarian power struggle, rather than one of the neutral control of public order. However, O'Neill's reforms were far too tentative, fragile and short-lived for any serious crisis to have emerged between a reforming government and its principal coercive agency. In any case the early reversion of the IRA to a an atavistic and swiftly escalating armed struggle retrospectively obscures the issue. Nevertheless, the RUC's conduct during the civil rights period of the crisis makes it plain that its corporate interpretation of the situation was closer to that of William Craig, O'Neill's hard-line minister of home affairs, rather than O'Neill's own. Even more serious than these strategic shortcomings was the indiscipline of rank and file policemen, especially in Derry between October 1968 and August 1969. This allowed policing in that city quite rapidly to become a private war between Catholic residents and the RUC, culminating in the Battle of the Bogside.²¹

It is scarcely surprising then, that reform of the RUC was one of the most important elements of the reform package pressed on O'Neill and his successors by the British government. The reforms of the Hunt Report, which did so

much to propel forward the dissolution of the Unionist alliance and foster the growth of the loyalist paramilitaries, were aimed at civilianising the RUC and leaving the internal security function of the state's coercive forces to the regular British army and the newly-created Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). This policy direction seemed to have been vindicated by the revelation of further shortcomings of the RUC when the intelligence provided by the RUC Special Branch used by the army in conducting the first internment sweeps (August 1971), proved woefully inadequate and completely partisan.²² But civilianisation was overtaken by the ferocity of the IRA's offensive in 1970 and 1971 and it became clear that the police would have to be rearmed and revert to internal security duties, albeit in a context of Westminster control and army primacy. The rehabilitation of the RUC which was encouraged by the altered security situation and the mounting toll of murdered and injured officers, would henceforth be achieved by professionalisation rather than civilianisation.

If the changing security situation favoured the rehabilitation of the RUC, the changing political situation -- notably the imposition of direct rule -- posed serious questions as to the force's ultimate loyalty. The RUC had been the ultimate expression of Protestant hegemony and Unionist political control, but despite this, it appeared that it would acquiesce in the removal of these conditions.

.. the refusal of any elements of the police to be drawn into Unionist opposition to direct rule significantly enhanced the reputation of the RUC at an official level and helped pave the way for later changes of policy that placed greater reliance on the RUC in the security field.²³

In reality, there was little choice. From 1910 and the creation of the UVF onwards, an important role of first irregular, and then regular coercive forces in the Ulster Unionist alliance was to discipline, direct and contain the excesses of vigilantism. Even a ruling class as cohesive and determined as that led by Carson and Craig found difficulty in doing so. By 1972 this leadership was gone. Paisley was an extraordinary leader in his way, but he was a creation of street politics, a dubious proposition for a disciplined force to fall in behind. Craig carried no mantle of authority and was reduced to courting the paramilitaries in Nuremberg-style rallies. For the police to throw in its lot with the paramilitaries would be, at worst, to threaten a reversal of roles; instead of the regular forces giving their character to vigilantes, the vigilantes would impart theirs to the police. Even at best, such a choice by the police would compromise, perhaps fatally, the force's fledgling sense of corporate professionalism. In any case, in 1972, there were over 20 000 British troops in Northern Ireland. To choose the path of resistance carried grave risks of confrontation with vastly superior forces.

These signs that the police would henceforth be a professional rather than a partisan force were not materially affected by the conduct of the RUC during the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council strike. Despite inevitable criticism from Nationalists and Republicans, less partial observers have placed the alleged passivity of the police in the wider context of government and military failure to act decisively. The army had the dominant responsibility for security matters, and the British government showed a lack of clear commitment to end the strike by removing barricades and combating intimidation.²⁴ Whatever their individual views on the Executive and the Irish Dimension of the Sunningdale Agreement, there is no evidence that the police

acted as a body to overthrow them, or should bear responsibility for the failure of these reform initiatives.

This increasing confidence in the reliability of the police enabled the British government to carry out significant changes in security policy in the altered political circumstances after 1974.²⁵ The essential nature of these changes was twofold; first to redefine terrorism and related offences in criminal rather than political terms, replacing emergency measures where possible with due process, or at least a semblance of it; second to give the police a higher profile in the counter-insurgency campaign against the IRA, and in combating Protestant terrorism. These changes, made public in January 1977, have set the pattern for the RUC's role ever since. The verdict on how it has performed that role is inevitably mixed, and usually reflects in some degree or another the observer's political perspectives. But although the RUC remains an overwhelmingly Protestant force,²⁶ and it is disliked and distrusted by significant numbers of Catholics, it cannot be regarded as an independent source of resistance to reform and negotiated attempts to resolve the Northern Ireland problem, either as a corporate whole, or as a haven for significant numbers of dissident ultras. This judgement can be made while acknowledging several controversial aspects of the RUC's operations since the late 1970s. These include revelations of brutality during interrogation at the RUC's Castlereagh headquarters in Belfast,²⁷ allegations of a 'shoot to kill' policy of the RUC in the mid-1980s,²⁸ and of collusion in passing intelligence information to Protestant terrorists in 1989.²⁹

It can be argued that the first two of these, however morally dubious or tactically misconceived, should be seen in the narrow context of operational exigencies in a

counter-insurgency campaign. These corporate imperatives, rather than ethnically-motivated attempts to subvert wider political processes, in all likelihood account for these problematic aspects of police operations.³⁰ The third category of alleged misconduct is potentially more damaging, given that contacts with Protestant extremists suggest a reversion to sectarian policing. The verdict of the British government inquiry into the affair,³¹ however, was that collusion between security forces and loyalists was "neither widespread nor institutionalised".³² In fact, although the report's 83 recommendations dealt with police procedures, they left the impression that the problem of collusion centred on the Ulster Defence Regiment, rather than the police, a separate issue which will be dealt with in due course.³³

The absence of any significant evidence linking the RUC to widespread ultra dissidence makes the positive indications of the force's professionalism all the more impressive. Three examples make the point; firstly the vigour with which the RUC confronted the 1977 loyalist strike, by comparison with 1974; secondly, the impressive detection and conviction rate against Protestant terrorists, at least until the latter re-organised on tighter, less penetrable lines in the late 1980s and early 1990s; thirdly the conduct of the RUC in the highly-charged atmosphere of loyalist protest against the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1987.

The last of these is probably the most significant. The implementation of the accord in the teeth of vehement rejection by loyalists caused what one observer called "...ferocious conflicts of loyalty within the RUC and UDR...".³⁴ Such conflicts were exacerbated by "...hostility from their own community, consisting mainly of steady pressure on their least professional members, the part-time

reservists living in loyalist, working class estates".³⁵ This pressure included firearm and petrol bomb attacks on the families and homes of RUC officers while they were on duty, resulting in more than 30 families having to move to safer areas. Despite the RUC's misgivings at features of the Agreement, especially the right of the Irish government to raise security and policing issues at the standing inter-governmental conference, loyalist politicians and paramilitaries were unable to capitalise on either the conflicts of loyalty, or the intimidation.³⁶ No police revolt was forthcoming, and despite continuing criticisms by Northern Ireland Nationalists and the Irish government, the force held firm.³⁷

If the RUC is very largely free of loyalist dissidence, the status of the other locally-recruited branch of the security forces still has to be considered. The UDR has been the object of deep suspicion by Catholics from its founding as a replacement of the 'B' Specials. In fact, these suspicions have centred on the belief that the regiment represents too much continuity with the earlier part-time force for Catholics' comfort.³⁸ That there are grounds for disquiet is made clear by the fact that since 1970, more than 100 UDR members have been convicted of serious offences.³⁹ These have included the theft of arms and, as we have seen, the passing of intelligence to Protestant terrorists. Most serious of all, 17 UDR soldiers have been convicted of murder, though it is not clear how many of these were planned sectarian assassinations.⁴⁰

These figures are serious, although it should be noted that they cover over 20 years in which many thousands of men and women have passed through the regiment (its current strength is over 7 000), and 240 of its members have been murdered, the vast majority when off-duty.⁴¹ Nevertheless, although

the British government has consistently refused to heed Catholic and Irish government calls for the regiment's disbanding, it has been formally integrated into the British army in a move suggestive of a desire for closer control over its part-time members.⁴²

State Organs, the Extreme Right and the Break-up of the Afrikaner Nationalist Coalition

In South Africa, the security forces have also been central to issues of reform and reaction. A similar pattern of partisan policing has given way, in the wake of political reform, to a similar programme of security force re-organisation along more professional lines.⁴³ This has left security forces occupying uncertain ground between a reforming government and ultra groups, including paramilitaries.

There are strong reasons for suspecting that the South African security forces might be a centre of opposition to negotiation and reform, a source of action paralleling, if not actually coordinated with the extreme white right. In the first place, the South African Police has indisputably been an ethnic force, the South African Defence Force only a little less clearly so. Both have been so ideologically committed to the counter-revolutionary struggle which was the counterpoint to the reform process as to bear no resemblance whatever to the ideal of a politically neutral force charged with even-handed maintenance of public order. In short, the contradictions between all that the security forces had represented up to February 1990 and the demands of negotiation and transformation were traumatically sharp. In addition, security force members could expect not only to have to deal with former enemies on an altered basis, but also to expect profound changes in personnel, organisation

and orientation to reflect affirmative action goals, new forms of patronage and so on. For many the fear of official or unofficial revenge for past misconduct must have seemed very real.

The speed and scope of de Klerk's reform initiatives left no breathing space in which these contradictions could be softened, and no immediate alternative to the security forces as already constituted was available to keep order. By contrast, the RUC was afforded a breathing space of several years in which the British army took precedence in maintaining order, allowing the police to readjust to altered political conditions.

In the light of these conditions, it is not surprising that the security forces have been suspected of involvement in the political violence which has engulfed South Africa since February 1990. Numerous reports have been published which attempt to document and analyse the role of the security forces in this violence.⁴⁴ These are supplemented by interim reports of judicial and quasi-judicial bodies set up as part of the process of negotiation and transition,⁴⁵ book-length accounts by investigative journalists,⁴⁶ and the ongoing reports and investigations of newspapers.⁴⁷ For a number of reasons, this varied evidence is difficult to assess.

Firstly, the degree of latitude given to the security forces at the height of the struggle between anti-apartheid forces and the state in the 1980s has meant that covert units which may be currently active in violent destabilisation have the resources to cover their tracks. This situation is aggravated by the lack of any well-developed culture of investigation and accountability in South African politics, (especially in civil/military relations), and the need felt by current government members to protect themselves from

exposure of past responsibility for illegal acts of violence.⁴⁸ Secondly, much of the more dramatic evidence refers to the period before the reforms of 1990, and is based on confessions by former operatives which are difficult to verify conclusively and may be tainted by elements of personal instability and/or self-interest. Thirdly, some of the reports have been compiled by organisations which cannot be considered objective.⁴⁹

As a result, although there is a widespread presumption, supported by strong circumstantial⁵⁰ evidence, that members of security forces (especially, though not exclusively covert units) have been involved in political violence since February 1991, there is little clarity on how this presumption should be interpreted even (or perhaps, especially) among those individuals and groups who hold it most strongly. Difficulties of interpretation centre on the following issues; confusion between acts of omission and commission by security forces; the difficulty of establishing chains of responsibility for illegal acts, notably whether security force members act independently when they commit them, or under higher political authority; the fact that lack of professionalism in the police has two dimensions, political and/or ethnic bias, and shoddy procedures and other incompetence; the extent of links between regular security forces, ultra paramilitary groups, and black 'vigilante' groups. An inability (or unwillingness) to engage these issues leads to evidence being used to claim that there is a single source for the violence, 'destabilisation', and a single culprit 'Apartheid Power', rather than a complex pattern of discrete motives, actors and strategies.⁵¹

A more measured account argues that the violence lacks 'uniform motivation' at both elite and mass level:

..the violence is better classified as conspiratorial and turmoil producing in nature, originating from politically active networks of people in several camps (the government, Inkatha, and the ANC) who act according to their own agendas.⁵²

Arguing that for the government to be responsible for the violence would defeat its own 'stability goals' in effecting a negotiated transition, this account nevertheless acknowledges the responsibility of "semi-independent intelligence operatives" who, "disagreeing with de Klerk's policy change, wanted to see negotiation fail and the right-wing agenda succeed".⁵³

Another brief review of the available evidence⁵⁴ also locates the 'third force'⁵⁵ within the SADF's special forces and the Directorate of Military Intelligence which coordinates their operations, although it is more equivocal on the compatibility of the violence with government policy. This version has in fact achieved wide currency, although it remains reliant largely on historical, circumstantial, and deductive evidence to corroborate leaks from defecting security force personnel, and it was rejected in the Goldstone Commission's interim report.⁵⁶

The likely existence of elements in the security forces which have right wing sympathies and have tried to destabilise the negotiation process, has not prevented negotiations between the security forces themselves and the ANC. By late 1993, there were strong indications that corporate interests like security of tenure for currently serving senior officers were central to questions of transformation and allegiance. Reports of an agreement reflecting the ANC's acceptance of the need for continuity

and the SADF's acceptance of some political appointments suggest that the parties have reached a point at which the security forces are no longer regarded as a serious corporate threat to transition, although Commando (home defence) units, especially in rural areas may use their training and issue weapons on behalf of the right.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The dissolutions of the Afrikaner Nationalist and Ulster Unionist coalitions were historical passages in which balances of forces were clearly visible. Ulster Unionism had never achieved (had never even striven for) that level of mobilisation and integration which would have created a movement capable of meeting new challenges and restated crises from within its own resources. Neither in itself nor as the centrepiece of a network of mobilising organisations nor in fusion with the state could the Ulster Unionist Party create forces resilient enough, confident and numerous enough, to combine reform and counter-insurgency while still reproducing its own support base. In the absence of substantial social forces to support reform from within their own ranks, Unionist leaders were forced reluctantly to implement reform programmes forced on them by anxious and disapproving British governments. The results were disastrous for their credibility and the cohesion of the Unionist bloc.

The populist revolt which ensued was fuelled by class tensions, extreme religious convictions and proto-nationalist stirrings, all of which were endemic sub-themes in Unionism. It was encouraged by robust traditions of independent action from below, a vacuum of leadership, the insecurities of economic decline and favourable configurations of social geography. The weakly developed

structures of the Ulster Unionist coalition and the Northern Ireland state simply could not withstand such a combination of powerful, if incoherent forces and simply collapsed.

By contrast, the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition created forces powerful enough to transform themselves first socially and economically, then politically. Ironically, the very source of the strength and flexibility which insulated the National Party from the kind of populist revolt which brought down reforming Unionism -- a powerful and extensive state apparatus -- made it vulnerable from another quarter. The possibility that the state apparatus itself would be the site of revolt -- through a military coup perhaps -- has conditioned and set limits first to the reform process and now to the ANC's plans for a post-apartheid order. A disposition on the part of the top ranks of the security forces to see their interests in secular, corporate and material terms, rather than taking on an ideological and ethnic cast provides the best continuing hope that the dissolution of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition will not culminate in full-blown revolt based in the state apparatus. It is likely however that destabilising harassment by 'Third Force' elements will continue, at least up to the election planned for April 27 1994 and probably beyond.

It is unlikely that the National Party reformers intended to take their own metamorphosis as far as it has come. It is probable that what was meant as an opportunistic broadening of legitimacy in the interests of continued ethnic domination has turned through contingent, unforeseen and collateral effects into an abandonment of ethnic mobilisation in favour of entrenched defence of class privilege partly through negotiated constitutional protection and partly through strategic positioning in the economy and administration. What began as a planned and

limited withdrawal became, if not a rout, then at least a hasty forced march to the rear, latterly with less and less semblance of good order.

Nonetheless, Afrikaner Nationalism and the white minority rule on which it ultimately depended, had created the forces through which this improbable and undeniably impressive feat could be carried out. That it could be accomplished without the centre being overwhelmed either by ultra dissent from the rump forces of fundamental nationalism, revolt from within the state apparatus, or the many-sided assault of resurgent black resistance is a tribute to the dynamic and transformatory resources of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition and these things encapsulate the differences between it and the Ulster Unionist coalition.

1. Lipset, S.M. "Beyond the Backlash" Encounter Vol. 23 (1964) pp.11-24.
2. See George Dangerfield's vivid portrait of what he calls the "Tory rebellion" in support of Ulster in The Strange Death of Liberal England New York, Capricorn Books (1961) pp.74-138.
3. Ulster Unionism's most substantial supporter in mainland political life was Enoch Powell who held the Westminster seat of South Down for the Official Unionist Party between 1974 and 1987. But the support of this isolated and maverick (though admittedly substantial) figure emphasised the gulf which now existed between Ulster Unionism and mainstream British politics, rather than anything to the contrary. For an excellent summary see the entry for Powell in Flackes, W.D and Elliot, S. Northern Ireland: a Political Directory 1968-88 Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1989). Reluctance, frustration and bafflement typify the involvement of British politicians in Northern Ireland. These feelings are summed up by a widely-quoted remark of Reginald Maudling's as his aircraft gathered height, leaving Belfast after his first visit as Conservative home secretary with responsibility for the province in July 1971. "For God's sake bring me a large Scotch," he said. "What a bloody awful country". See Sunday Times Insight Team Ulster Harmondsworth, Penguin (1972) p.213.
4. See for instance the evidence of Cecil King's diaries, reporting conversations with the first secretary of state for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw. They are quoted in Bew, P. et al, The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72 Manchester, Manchester University Press (1979) p.209.
5. Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: a Political Directory p.415.
6. For a sensitive discussion of Protestant responses to the IRA's campaign, especially the difference between the murders of British soldiers and 'local' security forces, see O'Malley, P. The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today Belfast, Blackstaff Press (1983) pp.288-93, especially p.289.
7. Or what, in the 1990s would probably be called 'ethnic cleansing'.
8. The notorious chant, "Kill the Boer, Kill the farmer" is the best-known example.
9. See Ebersohn, W. "Die Misdaadsgolf as politieke faktor" Die Suid Afrikaan April/May 1992 pp.6-9.
10. The murders of some policemen could be attributed to APLA, but the characteristically chaotic state of that organisation meant that attributions were difficult to distinguish from criminal violence.
11. A good example was a prominently featured newspaper advertisement, whose double page spread was headed "If you're scared of majority rule, vote 'Yes'". See for example, Sunday Times 15.3.92.

12. The so-called 'Border Poll' was held on 8 March 1973. The questions offered for choice were; "Do you want Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK?" and, "Do you want Northern Ireland to be joined with the Republic of Ireland outside the UK?" The Catholic opposition parties and groups boycotted the poll, which yielded the result (on a 58.7% poll) of 98.9% of the valid poll in favour of UK link and 1.1% of valid poll in favour of United Ireland. See Flackes and Elliot, Northern Ireland: A Political Directory p.82.

13. Neal Ascherson nicely conjures the atmosphere of the Twelfth of July; "I remember how the heat rises all through the night before, up from the bonfires burning along Sandy Row, up from the chains of people waving bottles and roaring songs, up from the tiny boys -- like putti from Hell -- dancing to the drums in that haunch-flicking, foot-dragging step, in and out of the flames.... I remember the hot air pouring up from the preachers, chanting about the love of Jesus as the cinders rained out of the dark and filled everyone's hair with sparks and greasy black smuts. And the next day the heat shimmering up off the bands on the march, the Orangemen from Scotland -- wildest of all -- still drunk in mid-morning and hammering the drums like the heads of their enemies". Ascherson, N. "Cool breezes in Ulster's hot air" The Observer 12.7.87.

14. Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. From Apartheid to Nation-Building Cape Town, Oxford University Press (1989) p.42.

15. Marks, S. and Trapido, S. The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa London, Longman (1987) p.2.

16. Rudé, G. Ideology and Popular Consciousness London, Laurence and Wishart (1980).

17. Practices of this sort are now contested much more than they used to be. See for instance the closing of Short Brothers, the aerospace company and the largest manufacturing employer in Northern Ireland, in July 1987 after loyalist pickets, protesting that their right to display insignia had been curtailed, turned away workers from the three main plants. Reports made it clear that the loyalist militants were a small minority of the largely Protestant work force, but both company and loyalists claimed victory from the outcome. See "Shorts issues shutdown threat to loyalist pickets" Guardian 4.7.87, and subsequent reports on 6-9.7.87. See also Belfast Telegraph on these dates, especially "Now flag row at clothes firm" 6.7.87. As this report of a walkout over the flying of a Union Jack outside a factory makes clear, Catholic sensitivities can be aroused at quite a low threshold. This is especially true when, as in this case, the enterprise is in a Catholic area.

18. This is reflected in the regularly-expressed position of successive British governments that it is for the will of the majority to decide whether Northern Ireland remains in the United Kingdom.

19. However, this study has noted no signs that the right-

wing leaders are aware of the parallel.

20. Wright, F. Northern Ireland: a Comparative Analysis Dublin, Gill and Macmillan (1988) pp.287-8.

21. Inevitably perhaps verdicts on the RUC's conduct vary from incident to incident and source to source. Some emphasise the overstretched and underprepared condition of the force once the disturbances took hold, others the partiality shown to Protestant extremists by individuals and groups of officers (the Burntollet ambush being the most important example of this). The Scarman Tribunal blamed the civil rights leaders for turning Catholics against the police, and the police for responding. "They came to treat as enemies ..those who persisted in displaying hostility and distrust towards them. Thus there developed the fateful split between the Catholic community and the police". Quoted in Ryder, The RUC London, Mandarin (1990) p.115. For discussion of police conduct in Belfast during the communal rioting of August 1969 see Sunday Times Insight Team, Ulster p.130.

22. No Protestant paramilitary figures were picked up in this first swoop. On the intelligence failure of internment see "The internment blunder" Hibernia 27.8.71, p.5.

23. Brewer, J. et al, Police, Public Order and the State London, Macmillan (1988) p.52.

24. Brewer et al, Police, Public Order and the State p.63.

25. The failure of the Sunningdale package was the most important aspect of these altered circumstances, compounded by the failure of the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention (1975-6), and the IRA cease fire (February-October 1975).

26. In 1989, a newspaper report put the strength of the RUC (including both full and part-time reserve officers) at 12 800) with a Catholic component of 'around' ten per cent. The same report revealed that in 1987, there were 4 872 applications for 246 vacancies in the regular force, and 6 600 applicants for 600 posts in the reserve. One in 20 Protestant candidates was rejected in preliminary screening, and one in five Catholics. The RUC was studying the methods used by British police forces to attract members of ethnic minorities into their ranks. See "RUC aims to recruit more Catholics" Daily Telegraph 25.9.89.

27. For a critical account of the RUC's interrogation practices between 1976 and 1979, and the accompanying political furore, see Taylor, P. Beating the Terrorists? Harmondsworth, Penguin Books (1980). Taylor quotes (p.339) the opinion of what he (a critical, if not hostile observer) obviously regards as a credible source (an RUC interrogator), that between 1976 and 1979, "2 per cent of all those sentenced were innocent of the crimes of which they were convicted". Leaving aside the consideration that one innocent convicted is too many, and the nuances implied by "the crimes of which they were convicted", a figure of 98 per cent valid convictions under conditions of counter-

insurgency, does not seem to support an impression of wholly partisan policing.

28. See Stalker, J. Stalker Harmondsworth, Penguin Books (1988) and Taylor, P. Stalker: the Search for the Truth London, Faber and Faber (1987). John Stalker was deputy chief constable of Manchester, whose official inquiry into several incidents involving the RUC's lethal use of force is widely believed to have been obstructed first by the RUC itself, and then by British government and /or intelligence community intervention. See also, International Lawyers' Inquiry into the Lethal Use of Firearms by the Security Forces in Northern Ireland, Shoot to Kill? Cork and Dublin, Mercier Press (1985).

29. On the breaking of the collusion crisis see Fortnight, November 1989, p.19 ("Diary of Events" for September 1989). For its development -- in which more than seven instances of leaking involving photographs and descriptions of over 150 Republicans were involved -- see McKittrick, D. "New leaks worsen Anglo-Irish row" The Independent 23.9.89.

30. Although the accounts of Stalker's inquiry by both Taylor and Stalker himself are very sharply critical of the RUC, their versions unequivocally support this reading of the "shoot to kill" controversy. See Taylor Stalker: the Search for the Truth pp.114-122 and Stalker Stalker pp. 35-38. See also the profile of Stalker in The Observer 28.1.90, which comments; "The RUC as a whole felt bitterly threatened by the inquiry. It confirmed their view that the British government expected them to do the dirty work against the IRA but was not prepared to stand by them when awkward questions got asked".

31. The inquiry was authorised by the chief constable of the RUC and carried out by John Stevens, deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire.

32. Nevertheless, by the time the six month inquiry was over, 37 people had been charged with handling secret information in an unauthorised manner, 10 of them members of the UDR. See "New clamps on Ulster security leaks" The Observer 1.5.90. A summary of the Stevens Report was published on 17 May 1990. See Fortnight July/August 1990, p.19 ("Diary of Events" for May 1990).

33. This impression was strengthened by the conviction of two UDR soldiers for the theft of intelligence documents. They were sentenced to one year in prison in June 1990, in a trial arising from the Stevens Report. See Fortnight July/August 1990, p.20.

34. O'Leary, B. "The Anglo-Irish Agreement: Meanings, Explanations, Results and a Defence" in Teague, P. Beyond the Rhetoric: Politics, the Economy and Social Policy in Northern Ireland London, Laurence and Wishart (1987) pp.11-40, at p.23.

35. O'Connor, F. "Wooing Catholics With Fine Words and Cracked Loyalist Skulls" Fortnight 239, 19.5 - 1.6 (1986) pp.5-6.

36. As an example of unrealised hopes in this line, see McMichael, J. "Are Ulster Loyalists now at a critical crossroads?" Fortnight 236 24.4 - 20.5. (1986) pp.4-5. McMichael (who was murdered in 1989) was at that time a leading figure in the UDA.

37. For a summary of the RUC and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, see Brewer et al, The Police, Public Order and the State pp.71-2.

38. These misgivings are repeated by a military historian specialising in Ireland: "Officially there was no continuity between the two organisations, and the new one looks on the face of it like a 'third force'. But its undoubted vigilante origins and extreme ethnic divisiveness throw grave doubts on its social effectiveness": Townshend, C. Britain's Civil Wars London, Faber and Faber (1986) p.70.

39. Lennon, B. "Politics in Command?" Fortnight 298 September 1991 p.9. For a detailed dossier on offences committed by UDR personnel between 1972 and 1976 see "UDR: Too Many Bad Apples" and "Roll-Call of Disgrace" Hibernia 3.12.76, pp.6-7.

40. This issue is further clouded by the Crown's admission that the convictions of three UDR men were unsafe, on the grounds that the RUC falsified confessions. A fourth, convicted of the same murder, remains in jail, although his innocence is widely believed and strongly argued by a vocal pressure group. See "Murder confessions by UDR men 'fabricated'" The Observer 6.1.91; McQuade, A. "Justice is indivisible" Fortnight 296, June 1991, p.9; Moore, J. "Now it's only the UDR 1" Fortnight 309, September 1992 p.15. Another piece of potentially significant contextual information is that 76 people have been killed by the regular British army and the RUC in contested circumstances since 1969. Only one conviction has resulted. See Barron, S. "Glare of the spotlight" Fortnight 296 (June 1991). It is possible that members of these forces receive a degree of protection denied to the UDR.

41. One critic of the UDR has argued that the real figure of offences committed by its personnel is likely to be higher, "...since most members charged with crimes are immediately discharged and the fact that they have been in the UDR may never come out in court". The same source agrees that in fact very large numbers of men and women pass through the regiment (quoting the figure of 21 000 between 1970 and 1980, the first decade of its existence), but rather than see this as a mitigating factor, attributes the turnover to "...the large numbers who join the UDR for a short time during which they receive sophisticated training in the use of weapons and explosives, and then drop out". Although not directly stated, the strong inference is that they are then at the disposal of Protestant paramilitary groups. See Holland, M. "Skeletons in the closet of the UDR" New Statesman 11.4.1980. Ms Holland's main source of information was Michael Canavan, the Social Democratic and Labour Party's spokesman on law and order. A vivid account of the hazards faced by off-duty UDR personnel can be found in

Hearst, D. "The part-time soldiers who live with death" The Guardian 18.8.87. At that time, 166 members of the regiment had been killed, 137 off-duty, and 43 after they had left the regiment.

42. See Lennon, "Politics in command?".

43. Measures aimed at making the South African Police a more professional force include changes to recruitment and training, crowd control tactics, structural change in internal organisation - notably the merging of the Detective Branch with the Security Branch - and the drastic scaling down of the force's political roles. For details see Rauch, J. "Crisis of Legitimacy: the Limits of Police Reform" Indicator SA Vol. 8 (4) Spring 1991, pp.17-20. See also Nathan, L. and Phillips, M. "Security Reforms: the Pen and the Sword" Indicator SA Vol. 8 (4) Spring 1991, pp.7-10, especially pp.7-8.

44. See for instance; Human Rights Commission, Special Report 8, A Study of Repression and the Links Between Security, Vigilantes and Hit Squads Johannesburg (1990); Human Rights Commission, Special Report 12 Checkmate for Apartheid: Special Report on Two Years of Destabilisation July 1990 to June 1992 Johannesburg (1992); Amnesty International South Africa: State of Fear London (1992); See also Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town Back to the Laager Cape Town (1991) especially pp.103-121.

45. Notably the Goldstone Commission, which issued an interim report in May 1992.

46. See Laurence, P. Death Squads: Apartheid's Secret Weapon Harmondsworth, Penguin Books (1990); Pauw, J. In the Heart of the Whore: the Story of Apartheid's Death Squads Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, (1991).

47. Notably the Weekly Mail, Vrye Weekblad and New Nation.

48. These factors were all highlighted in the proceedings and conclusions of the Harms Commission of Inquiry (appointed in March 1990) into political murders, which resulted from confessions by former security force death squad members. See Pauw, In the Heart of the Whore and Laurence, Death Squads.

49. This is the case with the Human Rights Commission, an ANC-aligned body. Criticism of its findings may be found in Jeffrey, A. Spotlight, Institute of Race Relations (Oct. 1992). Critical discussion of this issue ranging over the Human Rights Commission, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Amnesty, and Goldstone reports, can be found in Southern African Report 12 June 1992 pp.1-3. This source reports Inkatha's national chairman's charge that even if Amnesty and the ICJ are not partisan themselves, they rely almost exclusively on the reports of bodies which are. While the principal accusation against the Human Rights Commission is selectivity, the report of the University of Cape Town's Institute of Criminology, Back to the Laager is palpably biased in interpretation and stridently partisan in tone.

50. Often circumstance (verifiable contacts between security

force units and black vigilantes, the placing of white men at scenes of atrocities) is assisted with a generous slice of deduction. A good example of this can be found in Back to the Laager (p.121) which quotes the "Institute of Contextual Theology" (without precise reference). The gist of the Institute's argument is that acts of violence are being committed which are "so professional, so sophisticated, so well-co-ordinated and so invisible", that "...we must look at the history of the special forces of the SADF. They have always trained and used surrogate forces: Koevoet, Unita, Renamo". This is a plausible argument, but its basis is different from what a judicial body like the Goldstone Commission would regard as conclusive.

51. See especially Human Rights Commission, Checkmate for Apartheid, which invokes the conceptual phantom 'Apartheid Power', as if it could be a historical actor. While the report contains a useful compendium of evidence (although a substantial amount takes allegations as evidence) it is weak analytically, especially in establishing relationships between actors, and has virtually no reflective dimension.

52. Adam, H. and Moodley, K. The Opening of the Apartheid Mind Berkeley, University of California Press (1993) p.123.

53. Adam and Moodley, The Opening of the Apartheid Mind p.125.

54. Nathan and Phillips, The Pen and the Sword pp.9-10.

55. This phrase, popularised by Nelson Mandela is a coded term for security force instigation of political violence, which can carry 'official' or 'dissident' connotations according to context and the user's purposes.

56. In a clarification issued by Judge Goldstone after critical discussion of this finding, he pointed out that he did not 'exonerate' the security forces of acts by omission and commission which contributed to the violence, but he had not found that a 'third force' 'orchestrated' it. See Southern African Report 12.6.92.

57. For an assessment of the state of negotiations between the ANC and the SADF see "When men of war bite the bullet" Sunday Tribune 7.11.93.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

When the intention of a comparativist is the parallel demonstration of theory, the focus is usually on some structural determinant of the situations compared. For Greenberg, class relations under conditions of industrial development, and for Akenson the cultural imprint of a set of ideas drawn from the same source, provided the analytical keys to comparison. The focus of this study has been rather different, not so much on structural determinants, but on the institutions through which these structural factors worked themselves out.

In both cases, coalitions were mobilised and personalities (Protestant Ulster, the Afrikaner volk) were articulated by these institutions. The coalitions brought together different class interests and ideological strands, creating popular political forces strong enough to take power and build states in which they could (to their own if no-one else's satisfaction) represent themselves as democratic majorities. These states protected and promoted the material, identity and unity needs of the coalitions' various components. They showed their sectarian and exclusivist natures in two ways; by expressing the particularist symbols of Ulster Protestants and Afrikaners; and by granting unequal access to these dominant groups.

Unity among these groups was essential for the maintenance of these states, and it depended on fostering a democratic, egalitarian and populist ethos which was plausible enough, at best to legitimise, at a minimum to obscure, the reality of hierarchical control and class inequality. This balancing act rested in each case on the state's ability to reproduce favourable economic conditions, enjoyment of freedom from outside interference and successful repression of protest and resistance from Catholics and blacks to their exclusion. In their maturity, both coalitions experienced crises which put these things in doubt. Central to these crises was reorganised and refocused resistance. The Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland confronted the state where it was weakest, on the issue of 'British standards' of social justice and civil liberties, instead of where it was strongest, in defiance of Irish nationalist irredentism. But nationalism could not be separated from social justice in the eyes of the Northern Ireland state's most determined attackers and its most intransigent defenders. Atavistic baggage on both sides made reform appear to be cosmetic reshuffling to one side and appeasement of ancestral enemies on the other.

Similarly, the workplace and township revolts which made themselves felt in South Africa after the Durban strikes of 1973 and the Soweto uprising of 1976 respectively, combined demands for social justice with a threat to the ethnic basis of the state in ways which were bound to divide the dominant group along much the same lines as in Northern Ireland. In both cases, the ruling coalitions divided principally over strategies to cope not only with the re-stated resistance, but also with broader elements of crisis like the effects of social and economic change and encroachments on their freedom of action from outside their own narrowly-based politics. The divisions became fault lines along which the

coalitions fell apart, the dissolution hastened (in different degrees) by already-existing contradictions of class and ideology, and the emergence of special interests such as (in the case of Ulster) the religious fundamentalism of the Rev. Ian Paisley.

It is not uncommon to observe ethnic mobilisation at work in movements aspiring to political power, or in those which have already achieved it and control a state apparatus. It is less common to observe the declining purchase of ethnic mobilisation and unity, resulting in the decay of coalitions which once gave expression to them. It is this aspect which gives particular interest to a comparison of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism. More specifically, in both these cases, a managed transformation from above was attempted on a coalition which had successfully integrated all classes and virtually all persuasions of Protestants and Afrikaners. In the case of Unionism, this initiative from above was quickly overwhelmed by mass-based resistance from the regime's own supporters, while in South Africa, the National Party successfully created and defended the political space in which it could manage and even exploit the wider political changes which were going on around it.

This study has discussed a number of factors which bear upon the contrasting fates of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism in transition and they might usefully be recapitulated at this point.

The Ulster Unionist coalition was constructed out of classes and interests which had identities of their own and vigorous popular traditions of direct action and self-help. The pattern of mobilisation and integration of these forces into a coalition was episodic rather than continuous, crisis-driven and narrowly focused, rather than reflecting broad,

long-term goals of socio-economic transformation of the coalition's members. These things were emphasised in a mythology which helped to bind the coalition together. Its principal motifs were (and remain) conditional loyalty to leaders and the celebration of populism and popular initiatives of direct action. It embodies a demotic consciousness rather than a formally-elaborated ideology and as such offers little purchase for remodelling and re-interpretation in the interests of reform from above.

The nature of the Northern Ireland state provides another essential feature of the Ulster Unionist coalition. The state embodied Ulster Protestants' determination not to be part of an Ireland defined by Irish nationalism and Roman Catholic social values. It was their principal guarantee against that eventuality, but it did not offer them in addition, specific, formal, and wide-ranging guarantees of their material advancement and identity concerns. In questions of territory, discrimination in employment, the defence of 'traditional liberties' -- in which, inevitably, the question of marching loomed large -- and the suppression of Catholic self-assertion, self-help and direct action rather than state sponsorship were often the order of the day.¹

All these features meant that Ulster Unionism contained elements in which class-consciousness co-existed rather than competed with ethnic identity, and traditions of conditional loyalty and independent action and self-defence were strong. The combination was too volatile for the relatively weak and fragile institutions of Unionism and the Northern Ireland state.

By contrast, the elements of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition did not to anything like the same degree have

separate class identities or traditions of independent action which had to be propitiated on an ongoing basis, and which could in times of crisis threaten to overwhelm the coalition's authority structure. There is no doubt that Afrikaner Nationalism was a popular movement, but if it ever was, it quite early ceased to be a movement of popular initiative.

Protestants could believe in a more direct and personal way than Afrikaners that they had created their state themselves. This was the meaning of their covenant, unlike the abstractions and historical confusions of the Trekker covenant. The social and political conservatism of the Ulster Unionist coalition and the siege metaphors of its mythology should not be allowed to obscure (as it has done immemorially in the eyes of Irish republicans and the British left) the popular and insurrectionist origins of the Northern Ireland state, and the populist undercurrents which had to be appeased in order to reproduce support for it. The anti-imperialism of Afrikaner Nationalism and its association with dynamic social engineering once in power, have given a misleading revolutionary veneer to a profoundly conservative movement in which constitutional continuity and rectitude were always more important than popular initiative, and whose popular elements were always tightly integrated and very firmly under control.

In these senses, the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition was much more self-consciously created and it was far more comprehensively and closely integrated. Demography and patterns of economic growth demanded elaborate state intervention to secure status, corporate identity and material advantage for Afrikaners. To create and operate such a system, Afrikaner Nationalism had, first of all, to be much more structured and stratified, geared for dramatic

social mobility and social engineering, guided by an ideology that was a remarkable blend of utopia and pragmatism. This in turn required elaborate and powerful autonomous state structures. Political relations within the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition after 1948 were increasingly dominated, not so much by the idea of the volk, but by the relation between the party and the state. Especially from the mid-1970s, the National Party became the party of the state. In response to its legitimacy crisis, it could not incorporate others into the volk, so it slowly began to accommodate them in the state. At the same time it tried to pretend that it remained a nationalist party in the ethnic and exclusivist sense, but this contradiction could not be sustained indefinitely. Camouflaged (though not from the ultras who opposed them, at first from within, and then from a separate right wing) by the smoke and mirrors of reform and insulated by the power of the state, the National Party shed the outward trappings of ethnic nationalism and after 1990 emerged, largely transformed into a conservative party.

Finally, if the contrasting trajectories of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism through similar cycles of growth, maturity and decay are explicable in terms of the themes which this study has brought forward, what bearing do such explanations have on concepts like ethnicity and class which are habitually invoked in the contexts of these movements?

The idea of political ethnicity in the sense of solidarity and identity based on feelings of extended kinship and elaborated with reference to commonalities of language, culture or religion, and articulated in a mythology of shared historical experience, is useful in interpreting the life-cycles of Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism. Perhaps the first thing that the histories of these movements seem to suggest about the nature of ethnicity is

that ethnic identities are not pure, unambiguous and unchanging. In fact, both coalitions represented compromises between versions of identity. The more pragmatic Afrikaner Nationalists always recognised that they could not rule alone. If white supremacy was essential for the survival of Afrikaner ethnic identity, then Afrikaner Nationalism was probably the best way in which white supremacy could be organised and legitimised. The result was a compromise in which strong doses of ethnic mobilisation were needed to give white supremacy the motive power it needed to survive, but ethnic exclusivity could not be allowed to predominate over secular considerations like economic growth and the need for partners, shaped by the exigencies of demography and the geography of settlement. In this way, ethnic identity was not something simply to be cultivated and exploited, it was a problem to be grappled with, and under conditions of crisis a source of conflict and fragmentation.

The competing dimensions of identity in Ulster Unionism provide an even stronger example of the untidiness of ethnicity. The contrast between metropolitan and loyalist versions of Unionism demonstrates the point. The two are divided on whether or not the British connection represents a positive identification with a wider polity and culture than the parochial concerns of Protestant Ulster, or is essentially instrumental, the guarantee of the survival of a narrower ethnic identity. A similar pattern to that of Afrikaner Nationalism, in which a compromise was stretched to breaking point under conditions of crisis, is evident in the competing identities of Ulster Unionists.

A second aspect of ethnicity raised by looking at the life-cycles of these movements is the question of its durability as a mobilising agent. Perhaps it is, as its critics suggest, purely a temporary phenomenon, the product of

specific economic, social and political conditions, vulnerable especially to modernisation and the shifting balances of class forces.² If the break up of the Afrikaner Nationalist coalition appears to give support to this view, there are grounds for sounding a cautionary note. Firstly, opinion polls published in late 1993 suggested that a clear majority of white Afrikaners now support the parties of the right for whom territorial self-determination and ethnic mobilisation are centrally important. Secondly, although the National Party has transformed itself, it remains dominated by white Afrikaners,³ and is committed to appealing to coloured people as 'brown Afrikaners. These things suggest that although ethnicity may not be the organic and eternal things that its zealots proclaim, it is more than the temporary phenomenon that its critics suggest. What have gone are the compromises which allowed ethnicity to be organised in certain specific institutional forms. Afrikaner ethnicity has come to be defined more broadly (to include coloureds) and more narrowly (to include only the descendants of citizens of the old Boer republics), but has not ceased to be relevant.

The third aspect of ethnicity raised by this study is the degree of difference in the intensity and range of ethnic mobilisation. The extent of the difference between Ulster Unionism and Afrikaner Nationalism on this score suggests that the former was a movement of ethnic mobilisation only in a weak and partial sense, while the latter was in a much more extensive and integrated sense. This again points to the great flexibility of ethnicity which is both its strength and weakness as an explanatory tool. It also brings forward questions of how class issues arise and how they are dealt with in ethnic movements.

Two points of contrast help to illustrate these questions. The first is that there was no parallel in Ulster Unionism to Afrikaner Nationalism's concern with the 'poor white problem'. Ulster Unionism did not have the resources or the autonomy to give systematic attention to poverty on an ethnic basis, but in any case was not based on conceptions of kinship which would give meaning to a 'poor Protestant problem'. Beyond tolerating a margin of discriminatory protection over Catholics against unemployment, Unionist leaders and Protestant employers felt no need or obligation for schemes of ethnic social mobility.

The second point of contrast is that as an Afrikaner moved up the educational and occupational scale he would be more likely to join the Afrikaner Broederbond, and even if he did not, he would find Afrikaner organisations appropriate to his altered economic and social status. An Ulster Unionist on the other hand would be less likely to join the Orange Order in a similar situation of social mobility (unless he had specifically political ambitions).

For Afrikaner Nationalism, it was the way that social mobility and ethnicity were bound together that helped to give the coalition its staying power. Since social mobility was not part of Ulster Unionism's agenda, some corporate identity for the Protestant working class and a clear indication that this identity was recognised and respected within the coalition was necessary. It is impossible to read the publications of the worker and paramilitary organisations of the loyalist revolt without gaining the impression that for many working class Protestants ethnic identity was constructed not in opposition to a sense of themselves as working class, but in part at least, through it. The idea that the most authentic, staunch and uncompromising loyalists are working class has been, in the

absence of the kind of ethnic mobilisation which would have transformed the class structure of Protestant Ulster, an essential myth. But it is a myth which, in the break up of the Ulster Unionist coalition, has led only into the various dead ends of reactionary populism.

1. Even where legislation existed, direct action was sometimes necessary to make sure it was applied. A good example is the Flags and Emblems Act (1954) which made it illegal to interfere with the Union Jack and empowered police to remove any other flag which might provoke a breach of the peace. The act was forced on a reluctant government by extremist Protestant agitation in the first place, and its enforcement depended on similar agitation. In 1964, Belfast's worst riots for 30 years were provoked when Paisley threatened to march his supporters to the Catholic Falls Road area to remove an Irish tricolour from the election headquarters of the republican Sinn Fein movement. The police were forced to do the job lest worse befall. See Moloney and Pollak, Paisley pp.65-6 and 115-116.

2. For a critique of such versions of the recent history of Afrikaner Nationalism, see Giliomee, H. "Broedertwis: Intra-Afrikaner Conflicts in the Transition from Apartheid" African Affairs 91 (1992) pp.339-364.

3. A newspaper report early in 1993 offered a profile of President de Klerk's sources of information and advice. Out of over a dozen figures listed, all were white, male Afrikaners with members of the Gereformeerde Kerk and the Broederbond prominent. "FW's men: whisky pals and experts" Weekly Mail 8-15 April 1993. Even when de Klerk is credited with consulting outside his own party, the names mentioned tend to be of white male Afrikaners; "De Klerk is consulting people of stature outside government and... among them is former PFP leader Dr. Frederick van Zyl Slabbert and former SA Council of Churches general secretary and member of the ANC's first 'talks' delegation Dr. C.F. Beyers Naude". Southern African Report 21.9.90.

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2. Newspapers and periodicals (all as cited in the text).

(a) Britain and Ireland

Belfast Newsletter

Belfast Telegraph

Fortnight (Belfast)

Irish Times (Dublin)

Hibernia (Dublin)

Daily Telegraph

Guardian

Times

Sunday Times

Observer

The Independent

The Independent on Sunday

New Statesman

(b) See over -----

(b) South AfricaNatal MercuryDaily NewsSunday TribuneSunday TimesRapportStarCitizenWeekly MailDie BurgerDie PatriotVrye WeekbladDie Suid Afrikaan

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